



# THE PHILOSOPHICAL IDEAS OF SWAMI ABHEDANANDA

*(A Critical Study)*

(A Guide to the Complete Works of Swami Abhedananda)

*by*

SWAMI PRAJNANANANDA



RAMAKRISHNA VEDANTA MATH  
19-B, RAJA RAJKRISHNA STREET  
CALCUTTA INDIA





## PREFACE

THE PHILOSOPHICAL IDEAS OF SWAMI ABHEDANANDA —A CRITICAL STUDY is a guide book for those who will critically go through the 'Complete Works of Swami Abhedananda', Vols I-X, published by the Ramakrishna Vedanta Math, Calcutta, on the occasion of the Centenary Celebration of Swami Abhedananda, befittingly observed during 1966-67. Swami Abhedananda was one of the direct disciples of Sree Ramakrishna Paramahansa. Swami Abhedananda's life was a life of renunciation and complete dedication to the service of God. His ideas and thoughts were fully saturated with those of his beloved Master, Sri Ramakrishna, who is worshipped all over the world as a Divine Incarnation of God. Sri Ramakrishna observed all the religious faiths and creeds and at the same time transcended the limitations of those faiths and creeds so as to realize the limitless Brahman. He practised all kinds of spiritual *sādhana*, and realized that faiths and methods (*matas* and *pathas*) only differ, but the changeless prime goal is one and the same. So he preached that only knowledge of God the Absolute is real, and permanent peace and happiness are attained only through the knowledge of the Absolute, which is all-existence and all bliss in the form of the *Atman*. Swami Abhedananda and all of his brother-disciples of the inner circle of Sri Ramakrishna preached the same gospel of truth.

Swami Abhedananda delivered lectures and held talks and discourses on various subjects of religion and philosophy in London, America, and other Continents and also in different places of India singing the song of transcendental truth and absolute freedom which brought a new awakening in all corners of the world. He delivered lectures on spiritualism or theory and science of life after death, philosophy, psychology, ethics, science, history, art, culture, education, social aspects of India and other countries, astronomy, and many other subjects. He fully discussed about Hinduism, Buddhism, Lamaism, Jainism, Mohammedanism, Sufism, Christianity and about their different sects and aspects in a lucid and comparative way, and it is needless to say that all his discussions and outlook were liberal,

all-comprehensive, and sympathetic. And not only that, but also he concluded all his lectures and talks and discourses and advised everybody to concentrate their attention to the supreme goal of human life, which is no other than the realization of God-consciousness or *aparokshānubhūti*.

Swami Abhedananda's lectures, talks, and discourses are very lucid, rational, and scientific. The language and method of interpretation adopted by him are also very simple, sweet, and penetrating. He himself realized the absolute Truth which he mentioned in the dedication of the book *Self-knowledge*: "To the Lotus feet of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna, My Divine Guru, by whose grace the Bliss of Self-knowledge is realized". So we see that in all his lectures, talks, and discourses, he laid emphasis on the achievement of supreme knowledge of the *Atman*.

In this volume on Philosophical Analysis of Swami Abhedananda, we have begun with the discussion on the Swami's Autobiography, printed from the *Contemporary Indian Philosophy*, edited by J. H. Muirhead, L.L.D., F.B.A., and S. Radhakrishnan, D.Litt., and published by Messrs. George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., Museum Street, London. We are grateful to the said publishers for giving us permission to print this article in the present edition of this volume. The Autobiography is very short but eventful and historical.

A discussion on the philosophical viewpoints along with religio-philosophical ideas of Sree Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Swami Abhedananda have been depicted, so as to throw light upon the whole content of this book. This type of discussion is not new, because Dr. Adhar Chandra Das and Dr. Satish Chandra Chatterjee have attempted before with their best abilities to determine the philosophy of Sree Ramakrishna. Besides, Dr. Nirode Baran Chakraborty of Presidency College, Calcutta, has published a book in Bengali on the religious ideas of Sree Ramakrishna. This offering of ours is a humble attempt for ascertaining the philosophical viewpoints as well as philosophies of Sree Ramakrishna and of Swami Abhedananda. It is a fact that Sree Ramakrishna Paramahamsadeva came with a new unifying message and mission in this age of reason and science. There we find many controversies as to what is the

philosophical viewpoint of Sri Ramakrishna. Some say that Sri Ramakrishna was a true kind of Bhakta. Some call Him a Tantiic, some call Him a staunch follower of Sankara, and some are of the opinion that His philosophy is a compromise of the philosophical thoughts of Ramanuja and Nimvaika, etc. But from various sayings-cum-teachings of Sree Ramakrishna it is understood that He realized the essence of all philosophies, all religions, and all ethical faiths and principles. But, to tell the truth, His philosophy or religio-philosophical thought is not at all a synthesis of all kinds of philosophy and religion as predicted by all the saviours or religious teachers, but He (Sri Ramakrishna) practised all the time alternative paths or religious *sādhana*s to reach one and the same absolute Truth which is known as God-realization or *Brahmānubhūti*.

We have tried our best to offer in this volume a plausible solution for men of reason or rational vision. And it should be remembered that it is not the last word to determine the philosophy and philosophical viewpoint of Sree Ramakrishna, but is an humble attempt to be examined with a liberal and unbiased mind living above all kinds of stereotyped idea and dogmatic belief.

In this book, the central ideas of all the lectures-cum-chapters have been discussed in short, so as to help the readers in easily grasping the entire theme and purport of Swami Abhedananda's lectures, talks, and discourses. Hence the book may be called a guide book to all the Swami's lectures or discussions.

Swami Abhedananda was a born preacher with an extraordinary merit and intelligence. His life was a life of dedication and service for the cause of humanity at large. He believed that Sree Ramakrishna was the great Incarnation of God, in whom all the powers and thoughts of all the Divine Incarnations were mingled and crystalised in a new form. And it has been said that the Swami's religious and philosophical thoughts are saturated with the thoughts and ideas of his Master, and whoever will come in contact with this thoughts and ideas, will get a living inspiration, inner urge, and divine enlightenment in the path of spiritual progress. It is needless to mention that all the books of Swami Abhedananda were not

written by him in black and white, but contain the extempore lectures delivered by him in different places on different occasions in London, America, different Continents and also in different places of India, which were noted down by the stenographers and forwarded to him except for the two books, *Stotraratnākara* in Sanskrit, and *Āmār Jivankathā* in Bengali, which he wrote himself. Some of his lectures were printed in book form in America and some in India, and in 1966-67, on the occasion of Swami's Centenary Celebration, all the remaining lectures, discourses, letters, and diaries, were bunched together and published in neat ten volumes. This present volume includes almost all the discussions of his lectures-cum-subjects in a concised form, but with some new interpretations. In the end of this volume, an Appendix has been added with the information about dates of the lectures delivered by the Swami. It is to mention that many of the portions of 'Goddess Durgā' and the religio-philosophical thoughts, included in the Swami's *Āmār Jivankathā* or 'My Life-Story' were translated by Prof. Kunja Behari Kundoo, and Shri Jasoda Kanta Roy, IAS. We hope that this compendium volume will throw considerable light upon the religious and philosophical thoughts and ideas of Swami Abhedananda, and thus will help the readers to easily go through the valuable pages of ten volumes of the Swami's Complete Works.

Now let me offer my thanks to Shri Suresh Chandra Chaudhury for going through the proof-reading with care and attention. I am grateful to Sree Ashutosh Ghose, Brahmachari Pranabesh Chaitanya, Devāshis Hore, and Durgāpada Bhattacharya for helping me much in writing this book and also in various other ways. The design of the jacket of this book is drawn by Shree Devāshis Hore. I am indebted to the trustees of the Ramakrishna Vedanta Math, Calcutta, for publishing this book.

SWAMI PRAJNANANANDA

Ramakrishna Vedanta Math,  
19B, Raja Rajkrishna Street,  
Calcutta-6,  
March, 1971

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THE  
PHILOSOPHICAL IDEAS OF SWAMI ABHEDANANDA  
—A CRITICAL STUDY

CHAPTER I

MY LIFE-SKETCH

by

SWAMI ABHEDANANDA

I

I was born in Calcutta, October 2, 1866. My father, late Rasick Lal Chandra, was a student of philosophy and teacher of English in the Oriental Seminary in Calcutta, for twenty-five years from 1836 to 1863. I was educated first in a Sanskrit School, then in Bengali Vernacular School and afterwards in the Oriental Seminary, from which I successfully passed the Entrance Examination at the age of eighteen.

From my childhood I wanted to know the cause of everything and used to ask questions about the "Why" and "How" of all events. When for the first time I read in Wilson's *History of India*, that Samkaracharya was a great philosopher, I had a thrilling sensation, and I wanted to become a philosopher and to study his philosophy. At that time, I was a student in the drawing class of the Seminary and was learning to paint from nature. Suddenly, a thought came to my mind that I did not want to be a painter but I would be a philosopher, and so I

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\*Reprinted from *Contemporary Indian Philosophy* (1936), edited by S. Radhakrishnan, D.Litt., and J. H. Muirhead, LL.D., F.B.A., by kind permission of Messrs. George Allen & Unwin Ltd., Museum Street, London.



gave up the study of the art of drawing and painting

When I was in the preparatory class I studied Sanskrit which was my second language. At home, I studied *Mugdha-bodha*, the Sanskrit Grammar, thoroughly, and acquired such a command of the Sanskrit language that I could compose verses in it.

At that time, I found a copy of the *Bhagavat Gita* in my father's private library and began to study it. When my father saw me reading that book, he took it away from me, saying that the *Bhagavad Gita* was not for boys. "It would make you insane." But his remarks could not stop me from reading it.

In my youth, I was fond of listening to discourses on Hindu philosophy and used to hear lectures on various phases of different religions. I attended the sermons on Christ and Christianity by Christian missionaries like the Rev. Dr. Macdonald, the Rev. Kali Charan Banerjee and others, who spoke regularly, every Sunday, at the Beadon Square on Chitpur Road in Calcutta. There, I also heard many anti-Christian lectures which were based upon the higher criticism of the Bible and free thought. I had the privilege of hearing Keshab Chandra Sen and Protap Chandra Mazoomdar, the celebrated leaders of the Brahmo Samaj.

In 1883, the noted Hindu philosopher, Pundit Sasadhar Tarkachudamani, delivered a series of public lectures on the six systems of Hindu philosophy at the Albert Hall, under the presidentship of late Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, the great scholar and writer. I attended the lectures on Vaisesika and Samkhya philosophies in which the Pundit explained the atomic theory of Kanada, and the evolution theory of Kapila, and compared them with similar theories of the ancient Greek philosophers as well as with the modern theory of evolution. Those discourses aroused my interest in the study of Western philosophies of ancient and modern Europe. Furthermore, when I heard Pundit's lectures on Yoga Philosophy of Patanjali, I became interested in Hindu Psychology as well as in the practical methods of the Yoga system.

I studied Patanjali's system under the direction of the great philosopher, late Kalibaran Vedantavagish, who at that time was translating the *Yogasutras* and was making an

laborate commentary on them in Bengali. After completing the study of the *Yogasutras* of Patanjali, I turned to analyze my own mind, to gain self-control and to enter into *Nirvikalpa-samadhi* through the practice of Hatha Yoga and Raja Yoga.

Then I studied *Siva-samhita*, a treatise on the practical methods of Raja Yoga. But I was told not to practise any of those methods described in the *Yoga sastras* without being instructed by a competent Yogi preceptor (*Guru*). Then my great anxiety was to find a suitable teacher or *Guru*. My class-fellow, Jajneswar Bhattacharya, directed me to go to the great Ramakrishna Paramahansa who lived at Dakshineswar, a suburban town about four miles north of Calcutta.

On Sunday morning, I reached the Temple Garden at Dakshineswar, where I met the great Yogi, Ramakrishna Paramahansa, and asked him whether he could teach me the practical methods of 'Yoga Philosophy'. He replied, "Yes," and after reading of my past life, he said, "You were a great Yogi in your past incarnation. Come, my boy! I will teach you how to practise Yoga." Then, he initiated me and gave me instructions in concentration and meditation. He touched my chest and aroused my *Kundalini*, the "Serpent Power" at the base of my spinal column, and I went into *Samadhi*, the state of superconsciousness. In him I found the embodiment of the Absolute Truth of the highest philosophy, as well as of the Universal Religion which underlies all sectarian religions of the world, and became his humble disciple. I had the good fortune to be with him and to serve for two years. There, I met his other disciples, among whom Swami Vivekananda was the most brilliant. I was attracted to him and became his close companion. Frequently, I used to discuss with him various abstruse points of Epistemology, Ontology and Metaphysics of India and of Europe.

At that time, I began to devote myself to self-education and studied Ganot's *Physics*, Herschel's *Astronomy*, John Stuart Mill's *Logic*, and *Three Essays on Religion*, Herbert Spencer's *First Principles*, and *Psychology*, Hamilton's *Philosophy*, Lewes' *History of Philosophy* and attended the courses of lectures at the Science Association, which had been established by Dr. Mohendra Lall Sircar, the famous

Buddhistic Philosophy as well as the principles of the Advaita or the non-dualistic philosophy of Vedanta

From Sri Ramakrishna I learnt that *dvaita* or dualistic philosophy, leads to the Vishista-Advaita philosophy of Ramanuja in search after the Ultimate Truth of the universe, which is one and the Absolute (Brahman), and that the search after Truth ends in the realization of the oneness of the *Jiva* (individual soul), *Jagat* (world), and *Ishvara* (God) in Brahman as taught in the Advaita philosophy of Vedanta, and that they are the different steps in the path of the realization of the Absolute Truth or Brahman

In 1886, after the departure of Sri Ramakrishna, I renounced world and became a *Sannyasin* monk along with Swami Vivekananda and other co-disciples (*Gurubhai*) As this was our second birth, we gave up our former names From that time I have been known by my present name I continued my self-education by studying Panini's grammar, six systems of Hindu philosophy, the *Upanishads* and *Vedantasutras*, with the commentaries of Samkara, Ramanuja, Madhva, Nimvarka, Vallabhacharya, and others

I travelled bare-footed from place to place, depending entirely on alms cooked or uncooked, whatever chance would bring to me. I always held in my mind the thought that the phenomenal world was transitory and unreal, that I was a spectator like the unchangeable *Atman* of Vedanta which always remains a witness (*Sakshi*) of the games which the people were playing in the world In this manner I endured all sorts of privation and hardship, practised austerities of all kinds, walked up to the sources of the Jamuna and the Ganges, where I stayed for three months in the caves of the Himalayas at the altitude of nearly 14,000 feet above the sea level, spending most of my time in contemplation of the Absolute, I realized that the phenomenal world was like a dream Thus wandering for ten years all over India, and visiting sacred places like Kedarnath and Badarnarayana, Dwaraka and Rameswaram, Jagannath and Puri, etc I met great sages and saints like "Trailanga Swami," "Swami Bhaskarananda" at Benares, Paohari Baba at Gazipur, many Vaishnava saints at Bindaban and great Vedanta philosophers at Rishikesh, where I studied monistic Vedanta philosophy

under the great scholar "Dhanaraj Giri," who was the eminent Advaita Vedantist of those days

In 1896, Swami Vivekananda, who after his successful lectures in U.S.A on Vedanta and Raja Yoga, given in the three years following his appearance at the Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893, had come over to London and had delivered several lectures on Jnana Yoga and Raja Yoga in that great City, invited me to assist him in his work there

I accepted his invitation and sailed from Calcutta to London in August 1896 My first lecture was before the Christo-Theosophical Society of London, on the Advaita Philosophy of *Panchadasi*, Swami Vivekananda entrusted me with the charge of conducting his classes on Vedanta and Raja Yoga there, and left for India in 1897 I continued my class lectures on Jnana Yoga, Raja Yoga, and delivered public lectures in churches and before religious and philosophical societies in London and its suburbs for one year When I was in London, Swami Vivekananda took me to meet Professor Max Muller and Professor Paul Deussen of Kiel University, who had translated sixty *Upanishads* into the German language and who was the author of the "Philosophy of the Upanishads" I had conversations with them in Sanskrit But Professor Max Müller could neither speak in Sanskrit nor understand Sanskrit words when spoken, because as he said, his ears and tongue were not trained in the sounds of Sanskrit utterances So, I exchanged my views with him in English He was deeply interested in the life and teachings of Ramakrishna and said, "Ramakrishna was an original thinker, for he was never brought up within the precincts of any university and, therefore, his teachings were new and original" This remark created a deep impression upon my mind Later on, he published the "Life and Sayings of Ramakrishna"

In 1897, at the request of Swami Vivekananda, I crossed the Atlantic and landed at New York, to take charge of the Vedanta Society which he had started in New York City There, in six months I delivered ninety public lectures before large audiences on Vedanta Philosophy and Yoga Philosophy of Patanjali, organised the Society, and held regular classes on *Bhagavat Gita*, *Katha Upanishad*, and various other

*Upanishads*, on the Secret of Death, Self-Knowledge,<sup>1</sup> Samkhya and Yoga Philosophy, for nearly twenty years under the auspices of the Vedanta Society of which I was the president

In 1898, Professor William James held a discussion with me in his house on the problem of the "Unity of the Ultimate Reality" This discussion lasted for nearly four hours, in which Professor Royce, Professor Lanman, Professor Shaler and Dr James, the Chairman of Cambridge Philosophical Conferences, took my side and supported my arguments in favour of "Unity"

I travelled extensively all through the United States, Canada, Alaska and Mexico, and delivered addresses on various phases of the Vedanta Philosophy in all the principal cities of those countries I delivered a series of public lectures on "Krishna and His Teachings", "Zoroaster and His Teachings", "Taoism", 'Laotze and His Teachings', "Lamaism in Tibet", "Shintoism in Japan", "Buddha and His Teachings", "Christ and His Teachings", "Mahomet and His Teachings", "Ramakrishna and His Teachings", under the title of the 'Great Saviours of the World'

In 1921, I sailed from San Francisco and crossed the Pacific Ocean, breaking my voyage at Honolulu, where I was a delegate from India at the Pan-Pacific Educational Conference. Then, I came to Japan and studied Japanese culture, philosophy and religion, stopping at Shanghai, Hongkong, Canton, Manila and Singapore, where I delivered the message of Vedanta Philosophy in popular lectures From Singapore I was invited to Kuala-Lampur in Malaya States, where I gave a series of lectures on "Confucianism," "Buddhism" and "Taoism" before Chinese and Hindu audiences From there I was invited to Rangoon, whence, after delivering several public lectures on the "Message of Buddha" and on "Religion of the Hindus," I returned to Calcutta

In 1922, I went to Tibet from Kashmere, crossing the

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<sup>1</sup> 'Self-Knowledge includes the following subjects Spirit and Matter, Knowledge of the Self, Prana and the Self Search after the Self, Realization of the Self, Immortality of the Self

These were published by the Vedanta Society of New York U.S.A., and afterwards in India by the Ramakrishna Vedanta Math, Calcutta

Himalayas on foot, to study the manners, customs and Buddhist philosophy and Lamaism which prevail among the Tibetan Lamas. I went along Yarkand Road, the highway to Europe, and stopped at "Leh", the capital of Ladak, in western Tibet. My destination was "Hemis Monastery," about twenty-five miles north of the City of "Leh".

In 1923, after returning from Tibet, I established "The Ramakrishna Vedanta Society" in Calcutta of which I am the President.

In 1924 I opened a branch of this Society at Darjeeling under the name of "Ramakrishna Vedanta Ashram".

This short sketch of my life will give the reader some idea of the different influence which have moulded up convictions.

## II

### WHAT IS VEDANTA

Recorded by J. S. WARNER

(Mr J. S. Warner writes to us —In regard to the Vedanta Movement, I enclose a general outline of Vedanta as expressed by Swami Abhichandananda, the present head of the Vedanta Movement in the Western world, successor to the late Swami Vivekananda, who first introduced this teaching (although it had existed for thousands of years in India) to the Western World at the World's Congress of Religions at the World's Fair in Chicago, Ill., U.S.A., in 1892.)

Many people have the erroneous idea that by Vedanta philosophy is meant a philosophy confined exclusively to the Veda, or Sacred Scriptures of India, but the term Veda in the present case is used to signify not a book, but "wisdom" while "anta" means "end". Vedanta therefore implies literally "end of wisdom" and the philosophy is called Vedanta because it explains what that end is and how it can be obtained. All relative knowledge ends in the realization of the unity of the individual soul with the ultimate truth of the universe. That ultimate reality is the universal spirit. It is the infinite ocean of wisdom. As rivers running across thousand of miles ultimately end in the ocean, so the rivers of relative knowledge, flowing through the various stages of

the phenomenal universe, ultimately end in the infinite ocean of existence, intelligence, bliss, and love. To realize this unity must be the aim of all true religion. "Truth is one, but the means of obtaining it is many." In the Rig Veda, the most ancient of all Scriptures, we read "That which exists, is one, men call it by different names." The Jews call it Jehovah, the Christians, God or Father in Heaven, the Mahomedans worship it as Allah, the Buddhists as Buddha, while the Hindus call it Brahman. Upon this fundamental truth rests the whole structure of Vedanta teaching. It insists upon this doctrine of the unity of existence under a variety of names, it offers an adequate foundation for all the different phases and systems of religious thought. Vedanta, indeed, establishes a universal religion, which embraces all the special religions of the world. It is not built round any particular personality. So long as a religion is limited to a personality it cannot be universal, as we find special religions, like Christianity, Mahomedanism, Buddhism, and kindred faiths, the followers of each, forgetting the principles become attached to the personality and refuse to recognise any other. This results in discord, conflict, and persecution, with which the pages of religious history are filled. Vedanta is a system of philosophy. It does not ask anybody to accept or believe anything which does not appeal to reason, or which is not in harmony with the law of science, philosophy, and logic. Vedanta, one of the oldest religions of India, is, in strict accord, with the ultimate conclusions of modern science, and preaches the doctrine of evolution. It also recognises the varying tendencies of different minds, and guides each along the way best suited to it. It classifies human tendencies into four grand divisions. Each of these methods is called in Sanskrit "Yoga." First is Karma Yoga. It teaches the secret of work, and tells us how we can turn our daily tasks into acts of worship, and thus reach perfection in this life through work. Second is Bhakti Yoga. It is the path of devotion and love, and shows us how to turn human love into divine, and thus fulfil the purpose of life, both here and hereafter. Third is Raja Yoga, the path of concentration and meditation, the evolving of finer perceptions. Its principal aim is to lead the student through concentration and meditation to the highest state of supercon-

sciousness where the individual soul communes with the Universal Spirit and realizes the unity of existence, eternal peace, and happiness Jnana Yoga is the fourth method It is the path of right knowledge and discrimination This, for those who are intellectual, discriminative, and of a philosophical nature Vedanta accepts the teaching of all the great spiritual teachers of the world, recognises them as incarnations of Divine Spirit, and leaves room for those who are yet to come for the good of humanity Vedanta explains the basis of ethics Why should we be moral? Not because someone has said this or that, not because it is written in a certain chapter of a certain Scripture, but because of the spiritual oneness Why we should love our neighbour as ourselves, because in Spirit we are already one with that neighbour The ethics of Vedanta brings peace and harmony to the religious world Wherever Vedanta reigns, there religious toleration and co-operation among all sects prevail, and religious persecution ceases for ever A student of Vedanta does not belong to any creed, sect, or denomination He is neither a Christian, a Mahommedan, a Buddhist, nor a Hindu, yet in principle he is one with all He is a follower of that nameless and formless eternal religion which underlies all the special religions of the world, and as he grows into a deeper and deeper understanding of this universal religion, he cannot but declare, as did Professor Max Müller "Vedanta has room for almost every religion, nay, it embraces them all" And so it must, because its whole teaching is based on those all-inclusive words of the Blessed Lord Krishna in the *Bhagavad Gita* "Whosoever come to me, through whatsoever path, I reach him All men are struggling in the paths which ultimately lead to Me, the Eternal Truth".<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Published in *The Brahmapadīn*, Vol XIV 1909



## CHAPTER II

### THE PHILOSOPHICAL THOUGHTS AND VIEWPOINTS OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA AND SWAMI ABHEDANANDA

#### I

Philosophy in India conveys the idea of immediate awareness or direct realization (*anubhuti*) of the absolute Brahman or *Atman* which is the highest criterion of human achievement, and this immediate awareness involves no act of intellect or reason, as Vedanta says that the transcendental Brahman is beyond speech and mind (*avām manaso'gocharam*), and yet it is felt only as an *existent something* (*astityevamupalabdhavyam*). In the West, philosophy means 'knowledge' or 'wisdom', and this act of love of knowledge or wisdom involves the process of intellect and reasoning. In other words, philosophy in the West means the intellectual pursuit or love for highest knowledge or wisdom. Hegel and his followers admitted idea and reality as one and the same, because they believed that there remains no gap or difference between matter and consciousness, or between intellect and intuition, or between reason and reality. Hegel said that all that is rational is real and all that is real is rational. According to Hegel, reason, thought, mind, intellect, intuition and Absolute are included in the same category. He maintained that the knower (*jñata*) and the knowledge (*jñana*), or the subject (*vishayi*) and the object (*vishaya*), appear as different from each other, yet they are the non-different aspects of the same Absolute. The Absolute itself knows everything of the phenomenal universe as the subject and this act of knowing the objects means it appears or manifests itself as the object. Descartes, Leibniz, and other Western philosophers were of the same opinion. But Prof. MacTaggart and some other Hegelians differed from it, to some extent. Kant, Bradley, and Bosanquet did not admit this opinion of Hegel. Kant said that there is difference between thought and

Reality, and so thought or mind cannot be placed in the same rank or order of Reality, rather Reality transcends the realm of thought and mind. Bradley admitted this viewpoint of Kant. Bradley said that mind or intellect cannot reach in any way the region of the absolute Truth, or the Absolute which transcends the categories of time, space and causation, and is placed above mind or intellect. Advaita Vedanta admitted this view. Like Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Vedanta said that when the salt-doll goes to measure the depth of the limitless ocean of the Absolute, it dissolves away in that ocean, similarly the individual soul loses its separate existence when it goes to ascertain the reality of the absolute Brahman. Advaita Vedanta said that when knowledge involves the category of relation, it is known as the relational and limited knowledge, so it cannot ascertain the reality of the absolute Brahman for its limitedness. But the non-relational absolute knowledge and the transcendental Brahman are one and the same. Sankara maintained the same view. Chitsukha charva called this non-relational absolute knowledge as the subject-objectless immediate awareness (*aparokshavyavahara*). Suresvaracharya and Padmapada also admitted this view, and they said that the transcendental knowledge is self-revealing (*syayam prakasha*) and, therefore, it involves no relation or attribute. Vachaspati Mishra also admitted this view.

Swami Abhedananda said that the attempt of Indian philosophy is to ascertain the real entity of both the world and the Absolute. Indian philosophy mainly admitted three principles, the individual soul (*jiva*), the world-appearance (*jagat*) and the absolute Truth (*Brahman*) in three different ways, and for this reason it is divided into three schools, dualistic (*dvaita*), qualified non-dualistic (*vishistadvaita*), and non-dualistic or monistic (*advaita*). While discussing the relation of soul to God, Swami Abhedananda said "From very ancient times all the best thinkers, prophets and the great religious leaders of the world, whether of the East or of the West, have endeavoured to explain our relation to God (whatever may be the idea or conception of God) and to the universe. Out of these explanations have arisen various schools of philosophy and different systems of religious beliefs

among the different nations of the world”<sup>1</sup> Swami Abhedananda forwarded that these schools are useful not only for the three classes of aspirants of knowledge, but also for all sincere seekers after Truth. He maintained that at first an aspirant who seeks for absolute Truth, lives and moves with some dualistic conceptions. The aspirant believes in an almighty all-merciful God who has created the world as His act of sportive play. He held first the theistic belief, and prayed to God for His mercy and love for going beyond the chain of the delusive world. As he proceeded on the path of dualistic *sādhana*, he gradually realized a close relation between him and his beloved God, and at last he came to know that this world as well as he himself are not separate from his beloved God, and thus he maintained the qualified non-dualistic faith which advocates that God (*Isvara*), the individual soul (*jīva*) and the world (*jagat*) are all inter-related, and the individual soul attains freedom or salvation (*mukti*) through the mercy of all-compassionate God.

The seeker after truth or freedom does not stop there, but from the qualified non-dualistic faith he marches further and ultimately enters the realm of the non-dualistic faith and realizes his eternal relation with the absolute Brahman. Then he realizes that he is no other than the secondless Brahman. Swami Abhedananda said, then he adopts the methods of analysis, observation, and experiment, and rationally applies them to solve the subtlest and most abstract problems of life and truth. Analyzing the nature of the individual self, he finds that it cannot be the ultimate unchangeable reality as it is entangled in the mess of delusion. After patient struggle the monistic thinker realizes that he is no other than the Brahman which is one without the second, and the world-appearance is delusive and fleeting for its changing phase and character. Swami Abhedananda further said “Starting from the gross form of the body, when a real and earnest seeker after absolute Truth marches onward towards the Absolute, he passes through all the intermediate stages until he reaches that state of Divine communion, where he realizes the oneness of the *Ātman* or the cosmic divine Essence of the absolute

Reality of the universe with the Brahman, the true nature of man" So it is a fact that dualism, qualified non-dualism and monism are different stages in the path of realization of the Absolute

Swami Abhedananda called these aspects of faith or *sadhana* as the stages in the process of, the spiritual evolution in his discussion on *Universality of Vedantic Religion*. Regarding the non-dualistic or monistic stage, he said that it is 'another still closer realization'. So the Swami neither discouraged nor disregarded any religious doctrine or faith as unnecessary, but he regarded all of them as the *alternative* paths or struggles for attaining to the realization of the Absolute Brahman. He clearly said "Therefore, the monistic thinkers, who are the sincere and earnest seekers after the Absolute, do not stop in dualism, do not stop in qualified non-dualism, but want to go deeper and still further and try to find out the absolute Truth, which is beyond all changes and beyond all relations"<sup>2</sup>

Swami Abhedananda admitted also the utility of the *yogic sadhana* for attaining to absolute Truth. He forwarded "There is another reason why universal religion of Vedanta can be called universal? Because Vedanta does not prescribe any particular method of worship for all individuals, but, on the contrary, it classifies the human minds according to the variety of their tendencies, and these are divided into four divisions, and these are again divided into other subdivisions which include all classes of religious inquiry. These are called Yoga, which means the 'path by which one can attain to the goal'. And it should be remembered that the *yogic sadhana* is regarded as an *alternative* method for realization of the Absolute, because the individual souls are possessed of different tastes, tendencies and temperaments, so the *alternative* methods of spiritual *sadhana* are beneficial for them to reach their cherished destination, ..."

Swami Abhedananda also created a closer link between philosophy and religion. He said that universal religion of Vedanta is both a religion and a philosophy, and both philosophy and religion are connected with science. Because

<sup>2</sup> Vide *True Psychology* (1968)

the objects of religion and philosophy are to get into the core of the ultimate Truth, and like religion and philosophy, science also tries to discover the same goal by approaching it in a somewhat different manner. It is true that 'although in the eighteenth century Kant and Laplace attempted for the first time to intrude into the mystery of creation in the light of Newtonian laws and sought to trace out the beginning of the world from the vast mass of nebulous matter, although Laplace tried by his nebular hypothesis to explain the mechanical formation and the separation of different planets, yet the theory of evolution hardly received any comprehensive scientific treatment before Darwin and Haeckel.' Gradually science discovered the theory of evolution, and explained the origin and growth of the world with its sentient and insentient beings. Philosophy and religion also discovered this process of evolution some thousand years ago. Swami Abhedananda said that Kapila discovered for the first time the theory of cosmology in India some thousand years ago, and he systematically and scientifically explained this theory in his Sankhya philosophy. While discussing the scientific as well as philosophical method of cosmology, as forwarded by the Sankhya philosophy of Kapila, Swami Abhedananda said that Kapila's theory of cosmology is so scientific and systematic that it has been adopted by almost all the philosophical systems of India. And it can be said, the Swami said, that not only in India, but also in all countries, philosophy and religion go hand in hand with science.

Dr S. N. Dasgupta also discussed about the methods of science and philosophy. "The method of philosophy is that of science. It (philosophy) analyzes experiences and the facts denoted by them, collects them, and arranges them in order, for us hypotheses and theories to explain them in relation to other experiences. It thus uses both the deductive and inductive methods of science, and attempts systematisation of all known facts and experiences." Croce called philosophy 'science of science', and admitted that science is not antagonistic to philosophy, but science and philosophy are inter-related with each other. The celebrated scientist Max Planck hoped that in future there will be a perfect wedding of philosophy with

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<sup>2</sup> Vide *Contemporary Indian Philosophy* (1st Ed., 1936), p. 189

modern science, as philosophy has a tendency to co-operate with scientific truth. Such is the conclusion of Prof Errol E Harris and other scientist-philosophers.

(Regarding religion and philosophy, Swami Abhedananda said: "Of the tree of knowledge, true philosophy is the flower, and religion is the fruit, so they must go together." Religion is nothing but the practical side of philosophy and philosophy is the theoretical side of religion.) The Swami was of the opinion that in this age of science and reason, everyone should study philosophy in collaboration with science or scientific thought that investigates material things through repeated observations and analysis its conclusions with reason. In his book, *Religion of the Twentieth Century*, he forwarded this view in a beautiful manner. He said that true philosophy is not banished from science. "The twentieth century may be called the age of science and reason. In this age, everything that is based upon scientific truth or upon rational foundation, appeals to our mind and we accept it as truth. Science today rules over our thoughts and reason, and our present tendency is to make all physical and mental activities harmonize with the laws explained by modern science." The Swami further added that the twentieth century needs a religion which will harmonize the ultimate conclusions of all the great philosophers of all countries and will be based upon moral and spiritual laws that govern our lives on the universe. The ancient, mediaeval and modern books on philosophy and religion and even the scriptures like Vedas, Upanishad, Puranas and also the Sankhya, Nyaya, Vaisheshika, Mimamsa, etc., should be studied with care with the help of science. It is sometimes believed that philosophy and religion have no connection with science, because their methods of enquiry into various problems and truth are not similar. But this belief or view is not correct, because both the philosophers and the scientists of modern time hold that their ways and means of enquiries into things may vary, but they are one and the same in their final conclusion or ultimate goal. Swami Abhedananda specially advised every seeker after truth to remove blind faith and prejudices and to adjust environments, favourable or unfavourable and to adopt arguments and scientific and rational thoughts so as to realize the absolute Truth. Mere

doctrines and theories are useless until and unless they are called into action. Moreover practical knowledge and experience bring success in life.

It will not be out of place to discuss first the philosophy and religion as well as the philosophical viewpoint of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa before ascertaining the philosophical viewpoints of his disciple Swami Abhedananda. Some interpreted Sri Ramakrishna's philosophical viewpoint as qualified non-dualism (*vishvadvaita*). They quoted the illustration of the Bel-fruit which was also propounded by Sri Ramakrishna himself. The illustration of the Bel-fruit runs thus. One day Narendranath (Swami Vivekananda) said to the Bhagavan, "Sir, may I ask what is meant by the theory of *vishvadvaita* (qualified non-dualism)?" Sri Ramakrishna replied, "There is a theory or doctrine, called *vishvadvaita* of Ramanuja. The doctrine of *vishvadvaita* forwards that the absolute Brahman must not be considered as apart from the world and the individual souls. The three form one, three in one, and one in three. Let us take a Bel-fruit. Let the shell, the seeds, and the kernel be kept separate. Now suppose someone wished to know the weight of the fruit. Surely it would not be sufficient to weigh the kernel alone. The shell, the seeds, and the kernel are all weighed with a view to get the real weight of the fruit. No doubt, we reason at the outset that the all-important thing is the kernel, and not either the shell or the seeds. In the next place, we go on reasoning that the shell and the seeds belong to the same substance to which the kernel belongs. At the first stage of reasoning we say, not this, not this' (*neti, neti*). Thus the Absolute (Brahman) is the only Reality and all else is unreal. At the next stage we go a little farther. We see that the kernel belongs to the same substance as that to which the shell and the seeds belong. Our relative phenomena (*lila*) must be traced to that eternal Being which is also called the Absolute. Hence, said Ramanuja, the Absolute (Brahman) is qualified by the finite soul and the phenomenal world. This is the doctrine of *vishvadvaita* or qualified non-dualistic Vedanta."

From this it is clear that Sri Ramakrishna does not maintain the theory of qualified non-dualism. Sri Ramakrishna said "The same Being, whom the followers of non-dualistic

(Advaita) Vedanta call the Brahman, the Absolute, is called the *Atman* (Self) by the Yogi, and Bhagavan or the personal God with Divine attributes by the devotees or Bhaktas, (lovers of God)<sup>4</sup> Sri Ramakrishna also discussed about the followers of the non-dualistic, dualistic, and qualified non-dualistic religious ideals, and in conclusion he said 'But all these various ideals of different doctrines or *isms* are one and the same Brahman, the difference being only in the names. It is the same Being whom men call by the name of the Absolute (Brahman), the universal Spirit, the impersonal God, or the personal God with Divine attributes"<sup>5</sup>

While discussing about Sakti or divine Energy as the source of the world-appearance, Sri Ramakrishna said, that though the followers of the non-dualism (Advaita) reduce the world-appearance to dream, which is the work of *maya* or nescience and consider the absolute Brahman as only real, yet the divine Energy cannot be separated from the absolute Brahman, as the burning power cannot be separated from the fire, or the rays of the sun cannot be separated the the sun itself. He said that the absolute Brahman, or the transcendent formless Absolute, itself appears as the immanent determinate (*saguna*) Brahman with form. "I call Him the Brahman when He is absolutely inactive, that is, when He neither creates, nor preserves, nor destroys phenomena, but when he performs all such actions, I call Him Kali, the eternal Energy, or the Divine Mother."

From this the religio-philosophical viewpoint of Sri Ramakrishna is clear. His philosophical doctrine is quite akin to pure non-dualism (Advaita) of Sankara, only the difference lies between them that when Sri Ramakrishna said, that creation i.e., projection (*sristi*) or manifestation of the individual souls and the world-appearance (*jiva* and *jagat*) is real, being the replica or counter-part of the indeterminate absolute Brahman, whereas Sankara reduced projection or manifestation to unreality, because manifestation is the change or changing aspect of the ever-changeless immutable Brahman,

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<sup>4</sup> Vide Swami Abhedananda. *Memoirs of Ramakrishna* (2nd Ed.), p. 119

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p. 121



and projection (*sruti*) or manifestation being the product of *maya* or nescience, is unreal. The idea of Śrī Ramakrishna is this, the same Brahman assumes the form of the transcendent Brahman and also the form of the immanent Brahman. "The Being is the same, only the names are different under different aspects—like the same substance expressed in different languages", said Śrī Ramakrishna.

Now let us quote the entire saying of Śrī Ramakrishna which he delivered in this connection. Śrī Ramakrishna said: "The followers of Advaita Vedānta maintain that creation (projection), preservation and dissolution as well as the individual ego and the external world—all are the manifestation of the eternal Energy (Śakti). Śakti is both static and dynamic. She is static when there remains no work or motion, and then she is known as Śiva, and she is dynamic when she works (dances), and then she is known as Kālī. They further say, when these are properly analysed, they appear as dreams, and the absolute Brahman alone shines as the only Reality and all else appear unreal. Even the eternal Energy (Śakti) is like a dream, unreal, but you may analyse and discriminate thousands of time, you cannot transcend the realm of divine Energy (Śakti) unless you have reached the highest state of *samādhi* or superconsciousness." Here you will notice that Śrī Ramakrishna spoke about the standard which is said to be a measuring stick or *gaz-kāthi*, and this standard is the immediate awareness (*pratyakṣānubhūti*) or realization (*anupalabdhi*) of the absolute Brahman. Śrī Ramakrishna repeatedly said that immediate awareness (*pratyakṣānubhūti*) of the Absolute is the only genuine evidence or proof by which we can judge or know whether dualism, or qualified non-dualism, or non-dualism or monism, is correct or not. Intellectual apprehension and book-knowledge are unfit to ascertain the right knowledge of the Brahman. *Vichāra* or ratiocination is the work of thought or intellect which is no other than the work of discrimination between two things, the real and the unreal, or the phenomenal and the noumenal. That very work of intellect again takes a man in the realm of egoism (the sense of 'I' or *aham*) which means duality or the plane of *maya* or nescience (but Śrī Ramakrishna uses the term 'the realm of

Sakti') Similarly Sri Ramakrishna said further "The very thoughts like 'I am meditating', 'I am thinking on the Absolute', are within the realm of Sakti (Because, in meditation also, there remains the duality of *dhyata* and *dhyeya*, i.e., the person who meditates and the object of meditation, and that means the realm of Mahamaya) Again they are the manifested powers of that eternal Energy Therefore the absolute Brahman and the eternal Energy are inseparable and one Again, the existence of one (the Brahman) implies that of the other (the divine Energy), as there is an inseparable connection between fire and its burning power If you admit the existence of fire, how can you deny its burning power? No one can think of fire without thinking of its burning power So the power of burning cannot be conceived as separate from fire In the same manner, we cannot think of the rays of the sun without thinking of the sun itself. Again, we cannot think of the sun without thinking of its rays Therefore, no one can think of the Brahman as apart from Sakti, or Sakti as separate from the Brahman Likewise, no one can conceive of the phenomenal as independent of the Absolute, or of the Absolute as apart from the phenomenal"

Sri Ramakrishna concluded with his definite view about the inseparability of the Brahman and the divine Energy (Siva and Sakti) and that means he expressed clearly his philosophical viewpoint by saying. "The same eternal Energy, the Mother of all phenomena, is creating, preserving, and destroying everything She is called Kali, the Divine Mother Kali is the Brahman, the Brahman is Kali, they are one and the same being \* \* \* Yes, the Being is the same, only the names are different under different aspects—like the same substance expressed in different languages, such as *jal*, *water*, *aqua* and *pani*, etc A tank may have four *ghats* (landing-places with steps) The Hindus drink water from one *ghat* and call it *jal*, the Mahommedans drink from another and call it *pani*, while the English from the third and call it *water* Similarly, God is one, only His names are different Some call Him by the name of Allah, some God, some Brahman, others Kali, other again Rama, Hari, Jesus, Buddha"

Sri Ramakrishna also mentioned about the sportive play (*lila*) of the divine Energy who is known as the Divine Mother,

and She manifests Herself in different forms on different occasions<sup>7</sup> She creates, i.e., projects means She preserves the seeds of creation (*samskaras*) of all objects, animate and inanimate after the destruction of the world at the end of a cycle (*yuga*), and brings them out when necessary<sup>8</sup> By this instance Śrī Ramakrishna proved that the absolute Brahman performs its work of projection (*srusti*) in the form of the divine Energy or Divine Mother, and the Brahman projects means it helps to manifest the impressions or *samskaras* which already existed in the womb of the divine Energy In fact, Śrī Ramakrishna said, the noumenon itself manifests as the phenomenal universe, and the *Upanishad* of Vedanta supported this view in a different way when it said "*tat sṛtvā tadevānuprabhāt*", i.e., the Brahman projects and then enters into the projection, or it can be said that the absolute Brahman itself becomes the individual souls and the phenomenal world, and this secret has been disclosed when the *Isha Upanishad* said "*Ishā vāsyam idam sarvam*", i.e., everything and every corner of the universe is covered by Isvara, i.e., the Brahman Śrī Ramakrishna also said "My Mother, the primal divine Energy, is both within and without this phenomenal world Having given birth to this phenomenal world, She lives within it In the Vedas, we find the illustration of spider and its web She is the spider and the world is the web that She has woven The spider brings the phenomenal web out of Herself, and then She lives in it. My Mother is both the container and the contained"<sup>9</sup> Here we find that Śrī Ramakrishna's viewpoint is out and out non-dualistic or absolute monistic like Sankara, because the Advaita Vedanta philosophy also admitted that the Brahman (*saguna*-Brahman) is both the material and efficient cause (*nimitta* and *upadana karana*), though Śrī Ramakrishna's non-dualism is somewhat different from that of Sankara in its way of presentation or

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<sup>7</sup> Vide *Memoirs of Ramakrishna* (2nd Ed), pp 122-12 And it should be remembered that this saying as an example has repeatedly been used in this book for the clarification of the idea or notion of Śrī Ramakrishna's philosophical viewpoint

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, p 124

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, p 125

<sup>9</sup> Vide *Memoirs of Ramakrishna* (2nd Ed), p. 125

application

Sri Ramakrishna forwarded an example of *jñāna* and *vijnāna* (knowledge and generalized knowledge, or philosophical and immanent knowledge and higher transcendental knowledge) Regarding *jñāna* and *vijnāna* he said 'Jñāna is to know the *Ātman* through the path of discrimination not this, not this' (*neti neti*) \* \* *Vijnāna* is complete knowledge or realization Some have heard of milk, some have seen it, but others have tasted it So with God Those who have heard of Him, are still in ignorance, those who have seen Him, are *jñānis*, but those who have tasted or realized Him, are *vijnānis* After seeing God, when one makes acquaintance with Him and realizes Him as the nearest and dearest of all, that is *vijnāna* \* \* To go to the roof, one must climb step by step, leaving one step after another The stair-case is not the same as the roof After reaching the roof, however, one can easily see that both roof and staircase are of the same material The same infinite Brahman appears as the personal God, Jiva and the twenty-four categories (*tattvas*) of nature"<sup>10</sup>

Generally it is believed that *jñāna* is inferior to *vijnāna*, i.e., *jñāna* is of the lower order, whereas *vijnāna* is of the higher order But from the standpoint of strict logic, there remain no orders of inferiority and superiority in the planes of *jñāna* and *vijnāna*, though it is commonly said in Vedānta that Brahman-consciousness first dawns in an individual (*vyasthi*) way and then in an universal (*samasthi*) way Sri Ramakrishna threw sufficient light on these *vishesa* and *samānya jñāna* (individual and universal knowledge) He said "Jñāna is to know the *Ātman* \* \* But *vijnāna* is complete knowledge or realization" So it is understood that Sri Ramakrishna called *jñāna* as the individual divine knowledge (*vyasti Brahmañāna*), and *vijnāna* as the complete divine knowledge (*samasti Brahmañāna*). Truly speaking, there is no later-former order of time in between individual consciousness and universal consciousness, but these two shades of highest consciousness, *jñāna* and *vijnāna*, come simultaneously after the purification of the mind, or after the realization of

the *Atman*

However, we find in the sayings of Śrī Ramakrishna a so-called time order in the planes of a *jñāni* and a *vyānāni*. As for example, while Śrī Ramakrishna met with Pandit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, he said "A *jñāni* goes so far as to realize that Brahman is and that is the absolute Reality, and all the phenomenal world is unreal. A *vyānāni*, however, goes further and realizes more. He sees that the roof and the steps are all made up of the same substance." He further said "The path of a *jñāni* is as good as that of a Bhakta. \* \* The *vyānāni* realizes that the same absolute Brahman appears also as personal God (*Isvara*), that He who is beyond all attributes, is also the personal God with all attributes and blessed qualities<sup>1</sup>. Here we find that the traditional Vedantic dictum differs somewhat from the teaching of Śrī Ramakrishna in respect of *jñāna* (individual divine consciousness) and *vyānāna* (universal divine consciousness), though the fundamental ideas are one and the same.

Besides, the words, *jñāna* and *vyānāna*, have been used in different scriptures in different ways and meanings. Sometime *jñāna* has been used to denote sense knowledge, sometimes to denote contingent phenomenal knowledge, and sometimes to signify divine or transcendental knowledge. Similarly, the word, *vyānāna* has been used in different senses. As for example, sometimes it denotes the knowledge, gained from repeated observation of raw materials of the phenomenal world, sometimes it signifies the generalized knowledge and sometimes it signifies the highest knowledge, as have been used in the *Upanishad*. Śrī Ramakrishna used *jñāna* and *vyānāna* as two different orders of knowledge, individual (*vyasthi* or *vishesa*) and universal (*samasthi* or *sāmānya*). In Vedānta, we find that when a man thinks and determines the real meaning of the *mahāvākya* by ratiocination (*vichara*), he attains to *vyasti-jñāna*, which is known as, 'I am Brahman' (*aham brahmasmi*) and when he goes deep into the meaning with an universal unifying vision, he realizes that the Brahman pervades the whole world, and everything in this world is

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<sup>1</sup> Vide *Memoirs of Ramakrishna*, pp 92-93

no other than the Brahman '*sarvam khalvidam Brahman*' and then he is known as a *vyāṇam*

Sri Ramakrishna used different examples in his different sayings so as to explain the nature of the world-appearance and that of the absolute Brahman, and from those examples we find that Sri Ramakrishna's absolute Brahman assumes both the aspects of form and formlessness (*sakara* and *nirakara*), determinate and indeterminate (*saguna* and *nirguna*), and these assumptions of the Brahman do not affect the undivided aspect of one without the second. While writing the life of Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Abhedananda said in one place "When Sri Ramakrishna had attained to the highest ideal of each Yoga, he had realized the spiritual oneness with the absolute Brahman and the Mother of the universe, and the rumour spread from mouth to mouth that Ramakrishna had reached perfection in this life." Regarding Sri Ramakrishna's realization of God, Swami Abhedananda further said "In this age of scientific rationalism, Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna has shown to the world how the Lord of the universe can be realized and attained in this life, and no one except him has ventured to go through all the tests of sceptics and agnostics to prove that he had attained to Godconsciousness. Those who have seen him, lived with him for years, and watched him by day and by night, have proclaimed before the world that he is the embodiment of the highest spiritual ideal of all nations" \* \* "and that Divine Mother gave him this power to return to this plane simply to help mankind and establish his mission" "To him, God was father, mother, brother, sister and every thing." "His mission was to establish harmony between religious sects and creeds. For the first time it was absolutely demonstrated by Ramakrishna that all religions are like so many paths leading to the same goal, that the realization of the same almighty Beng is the highest ideal of Christianity, Mohammedanism, as well as all other smaller religions of the world" \* \* He is personal, impersonal, and beyond both, that He is with name and form, and yet is nameless and formless. His (Ramakrishna's) one of the missions was to establish the worship of the Divine Mother and thus to elevate the ideal of womanhood into Divine Motherhood"

## II

Let us quote some of the sayings of Śrī Ramakrishna, which will clarify his ideas of the Brahman and the world. Śrī Ramakrishna said "Do you know what I mean? Satchidananda is like an infinite ocean. Intense cold freezes water into ice, which floats on the ocean in blocks of various forms. Likewise, through the cooling influence of Bhakti, one sees forms of God in the ocean of the Absolute. These forms are meant for the Bhaktas, the lovers of God. But when the sun of Knowledge rises, the ice melts, it becomes the same water it was before.

"That which is *Syāmā*, is also Brahman. That which has form, again, is without form. That which has attributes, again, has no attributes. Brahman is Sakti, Sakti is Brahman. They are not two. These are only two aspects, male and female, of the same Reality, Existence-Knowledge-Bliss—Absolute.

"Like sky or ether or *ākāśa*, Brahman is without any modification. It has become manifold because of Sakti. Again, Brahman is like fire, which itself has no colour. The fire appears white if you throw a white substance into it, red if you throw a red, black if you throw a black. The three *gunas*—*sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*—belong to Sakti alone. Brahman itself is beyond the three *gunas*. What Brahman is that cannot be described. It is beyond words. That which remains after everything, is eliminated by the Vedantic process of 'not this, not this' (*neti, neti*), and which is of the nature of Bliss, is the Brahman.

"In the same state, he said, addressing the devotees "That which is Brahman, is verily Sakti. I address that, again, as the Mother. I call it Brahman when it is inactive, and Sakti when it creates, preserves, and destroys. It is like water, sometimes still and sometimes covered with waves. The Incarnation of God is a part of the *līlā* or Sakti. The purpose of the Divine Incarnation is to teach man ecstatic love for God. The Incarnation is like the udder of cow, the only place milk is to be got. God incarnates Himself as man. There is a great accumulation of divinity in an Incarnation, like the accumulation of fish in a deep hollow in a lake.

"He who is Brahman is the *Advyaśakti*, the Primal Energy. When inactive He is called Brahman, the *Puruṣa*, He is called

Sakti, or *Prakriti*, when engaged in creation, preservation, and destruction. These are the two aspects of Reality, *Purusha* and *Prakriti*. He who is the *Purusha* is also *Prakriti*. Both are the embodiments of Bliss.

"If you are aware of the Male Principle, you cannot ignore the Female Principle. He who is aware of the father must also think of the mother (Keshab laughs). He who knows darkness also knows light. He who knows night also knows day. He who knows happiness also knows misery. You understand this, don't you?"

"Why should the universe be unreal? That is a speculation of the philosophers. After realizing God, one sees that it is God Himself who has become the universe and all living beings.

"The Divine Mother revealed to me in the Kali temple that it was She who had become everything. She showed me that everything was full of consciousness. The Image was consciousness, the altar was consciousness, the water-vessels were consciousness (*chaitanya*), the door sill was consciousness, the marble floor was consciousness—all was consciousness.

"That is good. 'I am Siva'—that is a good attitude. But I must tell you something else. The process of creation, preservation and destruction that is going on day and night is due to Sakti, the Power of God. This primal power and Brahman are one and the same. Sakti cannot exist without Brahman, just as waves cannot exist without water. There cannot be any instrumental music without an instrument.

"*Nitya* and *lila*. The *nitya* is the indivisible Satchidananda, and the *lila*, or sport, takes various forms, such as the *lila* as God, the *lila* as the deities, the *lila* as man, and the *lila* as the universe.

"The *vyant* always sees God. That is why he is so indifferent about the world. He sees God even with his eyes open. Sometimes he comes down to the *lila* from the *nitya*, and sometimes he goes up to the *nitya* from the *lila*.

"PUNDIT (ISVARACHANDRA) I don't understand that.

"MASTER The *Jnani* reasons about the world through the process of *neti, neti*, and at last reaches the Eternal and Indivisible Satchidananda. He reasons in this manner: 'Brahman is not the living beings, it is neither the universe



nor the living beings, it is neither the universe nor the twenty-four cosmic principles'. As a result of such reasoning he attains the Absolute. Then he realizes that it is the Absolute that has become all this—the universe, its living being and the twenty-four cosmic principles. \* \* Just so, if you accept the *niitya*, you must also accept the *lila*. It is the process of negation and affirmation. You realize the *niitya* by negating the *lila*. Then you affirm the *lila*, seeing in it the manifestation of the *niitya*. One attains this state after realizing Reality in both aspects. Personal and Impersonal. The Personal is the embodiment of *Chit*, Consciousness and the Impersonal is the indivisible Satchidananda.

"He alone who, after reaching the *niitya*, the Absolute, can dwell in the *lila*, the relative, and again climb from the *lila* to the *niitya*, has ripe knowledge and devotion. Sages like Narada cherished love of God after attaining the knowledge of Brahman. This is called *vyana*.

"VIJAY "If Brahman is our Mother, then has it any form or is it formless?

"MASTER That which is Brahman is also Kali, the Mother, the primal Energy. When inactive it is called Brahman. Again, when creating (projecting), preserving, and destroying, it is called Sakti. Still water is an illustration of Brahman. The same water, moving in waves may be compared to Sakti, Kali. What is the meaning of Kali? She who communes with Mahakala, the Absolute, is Kali. She is formless and, again, She has forms. If you believe in the formless aspect, then meditate on Kali as that. If you meditate on my aspect of Her with firm conviction, She will let you know Her true nature. Then you will realize that not merely does God exist, but He will come near you and talk to you as I am talking to you. Have faith and you will achieve everything. Remember this, too. If you believe that God is formless, then stick to that belief with firm conviction. But don't be dogmatic. never say emphatically about God that He can be only this and not that. You may say 'I believe that God is formless. But He can be many things more. He alone knows what else He can be. I do not know, I do not understand.' How can man with his one ounce of intelligence know the real nature of God? Can you put four seers of milk in a one-

seer jar? If God, through his grace, ever reveals Himself to His devotee and makes him understand, then he will know, but not otherwise

"That which is Brahman is Sakti, and that again is the Mother.

"He it is, says Ramprasad, that I approach as Mother,

"But must I give away the secret, here in the market-place?

"From the hints I have given, O mind, guess what that Being is'

"Ramprasad implies that he has known the truth of Brahman. He addresses Brahman as Mother

"In another song Ramprasad expresses the same idea thus

Knowing the secret that Kali is one with the highest  
Brahman,

I have discarded, once for all, both *dharma* and *adharma*<sup>1</sup>

"The striking of the gong is like the falling of a heavy weight into a big ocean. Waves begin to rise, the Relative (world) rises from the Absolute, the causal, subtle, and gross bodies appear out of the Great Cause, from Turiya emerge the states of deep sleep, dream, and waking. These waves arising from the Great ocean merge again in the Great ocean. From the Absolute to the Relative, and from the Relative to the Absolute. Therefore, I give the illustration of the gong's sound, *tam*. I have clearly perceived all these things. It has been revealed to me that there exists an ocean of consciousness without limit. From It came all things of the relative plane, and in It they merge again. Millions of Brahmandas (worlds) rise in that *Chidakasa* and merge in It again. All this has been revealed to me, I don't know much about what your books say.

"Brahman and Kali are not different. They are like fire and its burning power, if one thinks of fire one must think of its power to burn. If one recognizes Kali, one must also recognize Brahman, again, if one recognizes Brahman one must recognize Kali. Brahman and Its power are identical. It is Brahman whom I address as Sakti or Kali.

"Do you know what Brahman is like? It is like air. Good

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<sup>1</sup> *Dharma* and *adharma*, i.e., merit and demerit or virtue and vice,

and bad smells are carried by the air, but the air itself is unaffected.

"NARAYANA "Yes, Sir

"MASTER Brahman is beyond the *gunas* and *maya*—beyond both the '*maya* of knowledge' and the '*maya* or ignorance'. Lust and gold' are the '*maya* or ignorance'. Knowledge, renunciation, devotion, and the other spiritual qualities are the splendours of the '*maya* of knowledge'. Sankaracharya kept this '*maya* of knowledge', and that you and those others feel concerned about me is also due to this '*maya* of knowledge'.

"Following the '*maya* of knowledge' step by step, one attains the knowledge of Brahman. This '*maya* of knowledge' may be likened to the last few steps of the stairs. Next is the roof. Some, even after realizing God, retain the 'ego of knowledge'. They retain this in order to teach others, taste divine bliss, and sport with the devotees of God."

### III

Now, from these sayings of Sri Ramakrishna we come to know that his various thoughts and ideas are centred around the doctrine of unity in variety, and that means unity underlies the varieties all the time. This universal truth, which Sri Ramakrishna realized in his divine ecstatic vision (*samadhi*), is known as *yata mata tata path*, i.e., various opinions or doctrines are various paths or means, but the ultimate goal achieved from those faiths and religious practices (*sadhanas*), is one and the same. This universal truth has beautifully been described in the *Bhagavad Gita* (II 46)

यावन्तर्ह्युदपाने सर्वतः सङ्गतोदके ।

तावान् सर्वेषु वेदेषु ब्राह्मणस्य विज्ञानतः ॥

That is, when flood comes, all the rivers, rivulets, and canals are overflowed with water, and everything seems like a vast sheet of water. This vastness represents the undivided unique

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<sup>18</sup> The English translation of these sayings of Sri Ramakrishna have been adopted from *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* (translated by Swami Nikhilananda), New York, Ramakrishna Vivekananda Center, 1942.

experience of the Absolute The *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* (4.3.32) compares this state as the state of universal *ānanda*

‘एषोऽस्य परम-आनन्द, एतस्यैवानन्दस्य अन्यानि भूतानि मात्रासुपजीवन्ति ।’

SRI Ramakrishna said that this unique experience can be approached or gained by any kind of *sadhana*. You can eat bread of sugar from any part you like, but it will taste sweet. From it, it is understood that SRI Ramakrishna was neither in favour of any marked or chalked-out path, nor did he ever believe in any forced conversion, but he advised and suggested *alternative* paths or methods for attaining to Godconsciousness allowing freedom to every one to choose or select his own path and desired deity. He said that the same Being whom the followers of non-dualistic (Advaita) Vedānta call the Brahman or the Absolute, is called the *Ātman* (Self) by the Yogi, and the Bhagavan or the personal God with divine attributes by the devotees or Bhaktas (lovers of God). He, therefore, admitted that paths or methods of religious or spiritual practice are manifold, but the goal or ideal is one and the same. He said (already mentioned before) “But all these various ideals are of one and the same Brahman, the difference lies only in the names.” “Innumerable are the paths—*jñāna*, *karma*, *bhakti*, but they lead to the same goal.” Here SRI Ramakrishna admitted various methods of spiritual *sadhana*, and said that the goal, the *moksha*, is one and the same, as the rivers, flowing in different directions, meet at last the same boundless ocean<sup>1</sup>. So SRI Ramakrishna’s real idea of philosophy is that Divine realization or *brahmanubhūti* brings unity in variety, and then all distinctions vanish, and everything of the world is covered, i.e., saturated by the stupendous whole Brahman. Let us quote in this connection a beautiful saying which was told by SRI Ramakrishna to Keshab Chandra Sen at Keshab Chandra’s house. SRI Ramakrishna said “When perfect knowledge comes, man realizes one spirit in all. This spirit is homogeneous. In that state, he sees that the One has become the individual soul and the phenomenal world with its various manifestations and elements. It is

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<sup>1</sup> We find in Puspadanta’s *Mahimnasotra* ‘बैश्वानराहजुहुटिल्लानापथजुषाम्, ऋणामेषगम्यस्तमसि पयसामर्णबमिब ।’

true that the universal spirit dwells everywhere, but its manifestation varies" Further he added "First you will have to realize *unity* by the process of discrimination 'not this, not this (*neti, neti*) Then after reaching the state of realization (*brahmopalabdhī*), when you come down to the phenomenal world, you will discover that variety (*vaiśvā*) has come from unity (*ekatva*), and the same unity is the goal of variety The difference in the manifestation of sakti or power makes the variety, or the manifold (*nānātva*) When the flood of spiritual realization comes in the soul like a vast sheet of water, the universal Spirit covers everything Then all distinctions vanish Then a boat can pass over a field, and the path from one place to another becomes straight across the water" Madhusudan Sarasvatī forwards an example of the jar which when deepened in the tank of nectar (*amṛta*), is covered by nectar (vide *Advaitasiddhi*).

Now it can be asked as to what is the philosophical viewpoint of Śrī Ramakrishna To this it can be said that Śrī Ramakrishna's philosophical viewpoint is non-dualistic or monistic (Advaita), though this non-dualism of Śrī Ramakrishna received a new orientation, a new phase and meaning, and a novel outlook Because Śrī Ramakrishna admitted the existence of the phenomenal appearance as a sportive play (*līlā*) of Mother Kālī, who is the divine Energy of Śiva, the static and absolute Brahman, and at the same time he (Śrī Ramakrishna) considered Śiva, the Brahman, as the only source and ground of Mother Kālī, who is non-different from Śiva from the transcendental viewpoint Sankara also said in a similar way, but the difference between Sankara and Ramakrishna lies in the fact that when Sankara considered the Brahman as only real and its manifold manifestations unreal (*mūḥya*), Śrī Ramakrishna said that both the Brahman and the phenomenal universe are real, because the phenomena is a non-different appearance or manifestation of the absolute Brahman, or the Brahman is no other than its manifestation Śrī Ramakrishna maintained that an emanation of the Reality is a reality and not an unreality, whereas Sankara said that reality never gives birth to unreality, and the Brahman projects the phenomenal appearance through the medium of unreal nescience or *māyā*, and so the phenomenal universe is

regarded as a product of unreal nescience

Agam Advaita Vedanta considered the Brahman as both the cause (*karana*) and the ground (*adhisthana*) of the universe, but, in truth, the Brahman being absolutely transcended from the nescience or *maya*, is neither the cause, nor the ground, but only from the viewpoint of illusive appearance of projection (*srusti*), the Brahman is imagined as the cause and the ground. In reality, the stainless immutable transcendent Brahman never forms the cause, nor the background of the phenomenal appearance. Some are of the opinion that Sankara can be considered here as dogmatic for his unparalleled theory of non-dualism, for which he even refuted the unassailable views of Badarayana Vyasa, while commenting on the *Brahmasutra*. Sri Samakrishna did not accept this view of Sankara regarding the unreality of the phenomenal appearance of the real Brahman. He said "When right knowledge dawns upon a man, he realizes one Spirit in all. In that state, he sees that the same One (Brahman) has become the individual souls as well as the phenomenal universe with its various states and elements". Sri Ramakrishna further said that the universal Spirit dwells everywhere as unique and one, but its manifestation only varies, and so the individual souls and the universe are the real emanation of one absolute Reality, and that emanation is no other than the sportive play (*lila*) of Mother Kali who is non-different or inseparable from the absolute Siva or Brahman. Now, this doctrine of Sri Ramakrishna is a unique one which knows no difference between indeterminateness and determinateness (*nirgunatva* and *sagunatva*), between transcendence and immanence (*visvoturnatva* and *visvagatatva*), but the same inexpressible supreme Principle assumes the names and forms of the *nirguna*-Brahman and the *saguna*-Brahman or Siva and Sakti, the Brahman and the Divine Energy. While discussing about the 'Message of Vedanta' in the Jamshedpur Lectures in 1923, Swami Abhedananda said "In this age, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahmsa came to this world to show how to live and to teach the highest truth of Vedanta. The message of Vedanta is the same as the message of Sri Ramakrishna, and His teachings are the

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<sup>2</sup> Vide Abhedananda *Memoirs of Ramakrishna* (2nd edition)

living commentaries to the Vedas. The more you study His sayings, which are given in the simplest language which a child can understand, the more you will realize the truth of oneness which is taught by Vedanta." Swami Vivekananda also said that Sri Ramakrishna is the living commentary of Vedas, Upanishads, Puranas, Bhagavata and other Scriptures.

Advaita Vedanta, as preached by Sankara, said that the individual souls (*jivas*) are no other than the absolute Brahman (*jiva brahmaiva nāpara*), but the souls think themselves as separate from the Brahman for the cause of nescience or *maya*, which can be said to be the false knowledge (*mithya-pratyaya*). *Maya* deludes all living beings by its enchanting power, as a mirage deludes men with its illusive appearance of water, or as an oyster-shell or a piece of rope misleads men with their delusive appearances of silver or snake. Sometimes a man trembles with fear when he mistakes a dead and dry tree as a disembodied spirit, and it is seen that his real fear and trembling are caused by a wrong sight of a false spirit. Sankara forwarded all these examples in support of false knowledge (*mithya-jñāna*), and said that this unreal world misleads men of ignorance with its illusive appearance. It has been said before that Sri Ramakrishna did not admit this theory of Sankara as a whole. Sri Ramakrishna maintained that the world-appearance is the manifestation of the all-consciousness Brahman, because it (Brahman) pervades all the atoms and molecules of the world. In the *Upanishad*, it is also mentioned that in the beginning the Brahman (determinate Brahman) desired to be many (*ekoḥam bahusyam*) and after projection, it entered into all the projected objects and that means it itself became the phenomenal world. So from this Upanishadic text (*shruti*) it is understood that the Brahman is inseparable or non-different from the all-saturated and all-pervading Brahman.

Now, it will not be out of place to mention in this connection that when Sri Ramakrishna used to descend from his highest superconscious state (*samādhi*), he used to pray to this beloved Mother, Sri Bhavatarini, to allow him to live in the world with a definite mood (*bhavamukhe*) for working for the good of the world. That mood or sentiment also belongs to this world of nescience. But the world of nescience

did not appear to Śrī Ramakrishna as unreal, but it appeared to him as a divine playground of Mahamaya who is no other than the primordial Energy of *Isvara (paramesha-sakti)*<sup>2</sup> On the contrary, while explaining the doctrine of Advaita Vedanta, Śrī Ramakrishna mentioned about the unreality of the phenomenal appearance of the world by saying the Vedantins say 'or 'the Advaitavadins maintain', otherwise while living in the plane of universal consciousness he regarded this world and all sentient and insentient objects as the manifestation or sportive play (*lila*) of the Divine Mother, who is non-different from the pure transcendental Brahman of Advaita Vedanta. Śrī Ramakrishna repeatedly said that after Divine realization the wise ones or *jnanis* see everything in this world divine, as everything is an emanation from, or manifestation of, the secondless Brahman. Once he said to Vidyasagar "That which is impersonal and beyond all attributes, is also personal with all attributes and blessed qualities. The absolute Brahman is again inseparable from the divine Energy or Sakti"<sup>3</sup>

Śrī Ramakrishna explained to Isvarachandra Vidyasagar that Brahman and Sakti are inseparable and one. He said "In reality, there is no distinction between the Brahman, the impersonal Absolute and Sakti, the Divine Mother. The Brahman and Sakti are one as fire and its burning power are one \* \* They are one just as much as milk and its whiteness are one. We cannot conceive of milk without its whiteness. They are one just as a gem and its lustre. They are one just

<sup>2</sup> While discussing about *The Nature of Brahman in the Upanishads—the Advaita View* in the Essays in EAST AND WEST Philosophy, edited by Charles A. Moore (Honolulu), Swami Nikhilananda said about the nature of Brahman and that of *Maya* in a different way. He said "The unconditioned Brahman and the conditioned Brahman are not fundamentally different entities. Ramakrishna compared the Absolute to the infinite ocean and the conditioned Brahman to blocks of ice. *Maya* exercises its bewitching power upon the unilluminated but the sages, whose minds are enlightened by knowledge of Brahman, see in the relative universe created by *maya*, the manifestation of Brahman. To them everything, even *maya*, is Brahman. Ramakrishna used to say that to accept names and forms divorced from the reality of Brahman, is *ajñāna*, ignorance, to see Brahman alone, and deny the world, is *jñāna*, philosophical knowledge but to see Brahman everywhere, in names and forms, in good and evil, in pain and pleasure, in action as well as in the depths of meditation is *viññāna*—a supremely rich knowledge" (p. 248).

<sup>3</sup> Vide Swami Abhedananda *Memories of Ramakrishna*, p. 108



as the serpent and its crawling motion are one. We cannot conceive of the serpent without its movement. He who knows what light is, has the knowledge of darkness also. He who has the idea of the phenomenal universe, must have also an idea of the absolute noumenon. He who knows Sakti or the personal aspect of the absolute Being, knows also the impersonal Brahman. Again he who has realized the absolute noumenon, has also realized the phenomenon. He who has realized the Brahman, has also realized the personal God or Divine Mother (Sakti).<sup>4</sup> As for example, Śrī Rāmakrishna said in the *Kathamrta* (14th ed., p. 109)

‘यिनि श्यामा, तिनिह ब्रह्म । यौरह रूप, तिनिह अरूप । यिनि सगुण, तिनिह निर्गुण । ब्रह्म शक्ति—शक्ति ब्रह्म—अभेद । सच्चिदानन्दमय आर सच्चिदानन्दमयी ।’

That is, ‘*Shyāmā* and Brahman are inseparable, He, who appears with form, is also devoid of form, He, who is determinate, is also indeterminate. The Brahman is Sakti and Sakti is Brahman. Brahman and Sakti are one and the same. The Brahman is both *Sacchidanandamaya* and *Sacchidanandamayi*’

Regarding *rupa* and *arupa*, Śrī Rāmakrishna said elsewhere in the *Kathamrta* that when sky is seen from distance, it looks green, but when one goes near, he sees the sky colourless. Here the words ‘distance’ and ‘near’ connote the ideas of nescience and realization. That is, when one lives in ignorance, he conceives the form and personality of the formless and impersonal God, and when one attains to God-realization, he feels that God the Absolute has no form and name, but He transcends the categories of name and form (according to Advaitavada). Śrī Rāmakrishna repeated that “the absolute Brahman is called the Divine Mother by Prasad (Rāmaprasad), who asks his mind to understand it by mere hint or suggestion.” Śrī Rāmakrishna said “That which is described in the Vedas and Vedānta as the absolute Brahman, is my Divine Mother, I am praying to Her.” Śrī Rāmakrishna believed that Divine Mother bestows the highest knowledge of the Brahman (*brahmagyāna*), bringing Her devotees into the state of *samādhi*. “Divine Mother

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, pp. 108-109

brings Her devotees down on the plane of sense-consciousness, and allows them to retain the sense of 'I' and 'me'."

Once hearing these words or sayings of Sri Ramakrishna, Isvarachandra Vidyasagar smiled and asked him the meaning of Ramaprasad's words 'चातारे कि भज्जो हौंदि, जोक्त ना मन ठारेठोरे' i.e. 'shall I disclose this secret in a market-place? So my mind, knows it by mere hint or suggestion' Sri Ramakrishna said to Vidyasagar in reply 'Oh, you are a Pandit, a great scholar, you must know all this. When I sing in praise of my Divine Mother, I refer to the same absolute Brahman. The term 'mother' is very sweet. Therefore, I like to call Him (the absolute *nirguna* Brahman) Mother' <sup>5</sup> From these sayings of Sri Ramakrishna it is quite clear that both the determinate (*saguna*) Brahman and the indeterminate (*nirguna*) Brahman appear to him as one and the same, only the names and the attributes change.

In a conventional way, we generally divide the Brahman in four different states, and they are Turiya, Isvara, Hiranyagarbha and Virata. We conceive Turiya or the Fourth transcending pure Principle which is devoid of any tint or an iota of nescience (*maya*). We also assume the transcending Brahman as the ground and the cause (*adhusthana* and *karana*) of the remaining three Principles, Isvara, Hiranyagarbha and Virata as well as of the world-appearance. We also think that Isvara or the Isvara-consciousness shines in its fullness, though the manifested causal nescience or undifferentiated consciousness co-exists with Isvara. Hiranyagarbha exerts His power of projection of the universe with the help of nescience which is manifested, and Virata assumes the form of the world-appearance with its manifold living and non-living beings. Now, when we look at this assuming Vedantic chart, we notice some divisions or states, and naturally we think that one consciousness is different from the other, or there are grades or levels of consciousness. But, in reality, the *turiya*-Brahman-consciousness underlies all the Principles, and that basic or prime consciousness is the only real existence, and all other aspects of consciousness are, in

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<sup>5</sup> Vide *Memoirs of Ramakrishna*, pp. 109-110.

essence, non-different from the self-shining and self-revealing Divine Brahman consciousness, which assumes both determinate and indeterminate forms through the inscrutable power of *maya*. In fact, the Brahman never assumes the states of *Turiya*, *Isvara*, *Hiranvagarbha*, and *Virata*, and from the standpoint of strict logic of Advaita Vedanta, these grades, or states, or attributes, are regarded as adjuncts (*upadhis*) which are, in reality, unreal and meaningless.

Sri Ramakrishna also discussed about these states, and his statement in connection with the states of *turiya*, etc., appears something new. He said in the *Kathamrita*<sup>6</sup> "I take or admit all the states of *turiya*, etc., and also of *jagrat*, *svapna*, and *sushupti* (states of waking, dream, and dreamless sleep), because the states of *jagrat*, *svapna*, and *sushupti* evolved from the state of *turiya*, the Fourth Principle. In fact, those states evolve from the Absolute to the relative, or from the infinite to the finite. \* \* \* Again from the relative to the Absolute.'

Now this discussion about *niitya* (the Infinite) and *lila* (the finite) or the Absolute and the phenomena, made by Sri Ramakrishna, disclosed the fact that we conceive, or assume, the state of *turiya* or the fourth one to signify that the absolute Brahman consciousness transcends everything and every state of consciousness. But whenever we imagine a state as true, we are compelled to admit other states too. That is, whenever we conceive of the fourth state, we are bound to conceive all the states in relation to the fourth one. The states are, therefore, relative and false, whereas the stateless transcending Brahman-consciousness is only real and only existent. Sri Ramakrishna also believed this truth, so when he spoke about the sportive play or *lila*, he mentioned the name of *niitya*. He said, *niitya* and *lila* are related to each other, and these two manifestations also exist in relation to one independent pure principle, and that universal principle is the absolute Brahman. Again he said that *niitya* and *lila* are non-different in essence.

So the adjuncts (*upadhis*) like the attributes of *saguna* and *nirguna* are meaningful only viewing from the plane of pheno-

<sup>6</sup> Vide Vol. I, 14th Ed., p. 213

mena of nescience, and these are conceived of, or created by, the Sadhakas as the steps to the Divine realization of the Absolute, otherwise the Absolute is devoid of all names, forms, designations, attributes, and adjuncts. But Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa said "The same Being whom the followers of non-dualistic (Advaita) Vedānta call the Brahman, the Absolute, is called the *Ātman* (Self) by the Yogis, and Bhagavan or the personal God with divine attributes by the devotees or Bhaktas (lovers of God)." So we find that Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa believed in both the *nirguṇa*-Brahman or transcending Absolute and the *saguṇa*-Brahman as Brahmanamayi, Śakti Mahāmāyā, Kālī or Mahākālī, because he maintained that when it is necessary, the one and the same Brahman takes names and forms (*nama-rūpa*), which are also the non-different manifestations of the Brahman. Here Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa differed from Sāṅkara and other Advaita philosophers regarding the universal and unifying conception of the Brahman. The all-inclusive universal Brahman, according to Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa, is Advaita or non dual with its two assuming aspects, *saguṇa* and *nirguṇa*, and in this sense his viewpoint of non-dualism has a special feature of its own, and it is unique and novel in its kind. Because Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa's Brahman is transcendent (*māyottirna*), and though it manifests itself in the world or as the world of phenomena and takes part in the sportive play of the phenomenal universe, yet it remains with its nature of the absoluteness and wholeness. Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa's absolute is, therefore, both Brahman and Brahmanamayi, Śiva and Kālī, the noumenon and the phenomenon, and these dual phases are merely the assuming aspects of one and the same Brahman.

Swamī Abhedananda added a unique chapter on the philosophical doctrines of Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa (vide Chapter Eleventh) in his book, *Amār Jivankathā*.<sup>7</sup> The Swamī wrote "Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇadeva used to say that Brahman and Śakti are inseparable. If Śakti does not exist, the world will appear as false. At that time I, you, house, families—all these will appear as unreal. Therefore, as there exists Adyā-Śakti, so

<sup>7</sup> First published in December, 1964 (Agrahayana 1371), pp. 54-57.

the world of appearance also exists as real. He (the Brahman) has been manifested as the individual souls, the universe, and the twenty-four categories (*chaturvīṣṭi-tattva*), so how can you ignore or reject the existences of the individual souls and the universe? Otherwise the Brahman will appear as less when you will weigh it. If you deduct the shell, the seeds and the kernel from the Bel fruit, the Bel-fruit will be less in weight."

Regarding the Vedānta doctrine of Totāpuri, the spiritual guide of Śrī Ramakrishna, Swami Abhedananda said: 'Paramahamsadeva used to say Nyāṅgā (as Totāpuri was a *Sannyasi* of the Nāgā (naked) sect and used to wear the *laupina* only, so he was called Nyāṅgā) attained Brahman-knowledge by the process of discrimination like 'not this, not this' (*neti, neti*). But Nyāṅgā (Totāpuri) did not admit the power of energy (Sakti) of the Brahman. He considered the energy of the Brahman as *maya* or unreality, and, thus he ignored Sakti or energy. But when he lived here at Dakshineswar for eleven years, Mother Kali made him realize the non-dualistic knowledge (*advaita-jñāna*) that Brahman and *mayasakti* are one and inseparable. Then Nyāṅgā came to know that as fire and its burning power are inseparable, so Brahman and Sakti are not different from each other, but are one and the same, and their names only differ."

While explaining *maya* as the power or energy of the Brahman (as believed by Śrī Ramakrishna), Swami Abhedananda said in his "*Amār Jivankathā*" "Acharya Sankara explained the status of *maya* as 'अव्यक्तनामो परमेशशक्तिरणाद्यविद्या त्रिगुणात्मिका परा' (*avyaktanāmo paramēsha sakti-ranādeyavidyā tri-guṇātmikā parā*)". Sankara enquired "What *maya* is? It's name is *avyakta* (or unmanifested or undifferentiated consciousness) and it is the power or energy of Parameshvara or prime God. This *maya* is eternal *avidyā* composed of *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*, and it creates the whole universe. The Jnanis infer *mayasakti* as the cause, and after observing its effect they determine the cause. *Maya* is neither existent (*sat*), nor non-existent (*asat*), nor both existent and non-existent (*sadasat*), nor false (*alika*) like the sky-flower or horns of the hare. *Maya*

is neither different (*bhinna*), nor non-different (*abhinna*), nor even both different and non-different (*bhinna-bhinna*) *Maya* is neither attached (*sanga*), nor detached (*asanga*), and nor even both attached and detached (*sangāsanga*). Therefore, *maya* is wonderful and unspeakable (*anirvachanyā*). Paramahamsadeva also believed this doctrine of Sankara, but in a different way."

Regarding Brahman and *maya*, Swami Abhedananda wrote 'Ramakrishna used to say "The Brahman is both indeterminate (*nirguna*) and determinate (*sagun*) Do you know how the indeterminate Brahman (*nirguna-Brahman*) is? It is just like a sleeping and coiling snake, and when the snake moves or crawls in a crooked way, it is known as the determinate Brahman (*saguna-Brahman*) The indeterminate Brahman is like an undivided (*akhanda*) and calm (*shānta*) ocean In that calm ocean, there remains neither wave, nor activity, but it remains like the motionless static Sumeru (mountain) *Mayasakti* remains unmanifested and unseen in himself as if in a sleeping condition At that stage the whole universe and the individual souls remain unmanifested after the final dissolution (*mahapralaya*) But while awakened, *mayasakti* creates the waves (of creation) on the ocean of Sacchidananda This state has been called by Vedanta as the determinate Brahman (*saguna-Brahman*) At that time attributes like *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* are agitated or unbalanced (*gunakshobha*), and then the work of manifestation begins This determinate Brahman is also known as *ardha-narisvara* or *Hara-Gauri* in the Hindu Scriptures" Swami Abhedananda said that such was the Vedantic idea (of Sri Ramakrishna)

Regarding two kinds of power of *maya*, Swami Abhedananda wrote "*Maya* is possessed of two powers, covering (*āvarana*) and disclosing (*vikshepa*) The covering power (*āvarana-sakti*) of *maya* covers the one and undivided Sacchidananda which is the indeterminate Brahman and the disclosing or unveiling power (*vikshepa-sakti*) of *maya* makes the one and secondless Brahman manifest as the manifold A Sadhaka described this nature of *maya* in a song, '*tvamekā prakṛtiḥ brahma-ācchādinī*', etc

Although attributes of *maya* remain unmanifested in the *Ishvara-Brahman*, yet one and undivided existence

of the Brahman appears as divided and manifold. And for this reason Sri Ramakrishna used to say that one knowledge is real, and manifold knowledge is false or imaginative. This one knowledge or knowledge of oneness is known as *advaita-jñāna*. Further he (Sri Ramakrishna) used to say "Do everything, after attaining the knowledge of the *Atman*", and it means that we will have to attain first the knowledge of the Brahman, and then knowledge of everything of the world<sup>9</sup>.

One evening Paramahamsadeva was speaking with the Mother Bhavatarni (at Dakshineswar) in ecstatic state. He was telling "Mother, I do not want the knowledge of the Brahman (*brahmapañāna*), but imparting upon me the knowledge of the Brahman, you, Mother, do not make me senseless, Mother, I do not know Vedānta, nor do I want to know it. If I get you, Veda and Vedānta will be considered as insignificant. So I bow down to the knowledge of the Brahman thousand times. Those aspire to get that divine knowledge, confer it upon them. But I am your child, I want to get you only as my beloved Mother. The Mother is the all-bliss (*Anandamayee*)".

While attending Sri Ramakrishna, his Master, one day Swami Abhedananda asked him "What is the difference between the Brahman and the *jīva*?" Sri Ramakrishna replied "If a stick is placed in the current water of a river, the water seems to be divided into two parts, but at the bottom the water remains the same and undivided. Similarly the stick of egoism creates difference between the Brahman and the *jīva* or individual soul, but, in truth, the Brahman is not different from the *jīvas*. Vedānta said that after God-realization all kinds of difference (*bhēdas*) disappear and there remains only unique knowledge of the secondless Brahman.

One day a devotee said "Is the world unreal?" Paramahamsadeva said "Why the world is unreal? This is to be discussed from the state of discrimination (*vichāra*). Discrimination is the process of ratiocination like 'not this, not this' (*neti, neti*), and at that time if you discriminate that you

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<sup>9</sup> At first *vyāpti* or *viśeṣa jñāna* *aham brahminī*, and then *samasti* or *samānya jñāna* *sarvam khalu idam brahma*.

are neither the individual soul, nor the world, nor the twenty-four categories of Nature, then everything will appear as a dream. Discrimination must be made from the viewpoint of upward and downward (*anuloma* and *viloma*) levels of consciousness, i.e., from the plane of the Brahman and also from the plane of the phenomenal universe.

To make the philosophical viewpoint of Sri Ramakrishna more explicit, let us quote the dialogue between Sri Ramakrishna and Bijay. Sri Ramakrishna said to Bijay: 'You prayed to the Divine Mother, that was good \* \* \*'. Bijay asked the Bhagavān: 'If Brahman, the Absolute, be the Divine Mother, then will She be called with form (*sākāra*) or without form (*nirākāra*)?' Sri Ramakrishna said: 'The absolute Brahman and the Divine Mother of the universe are one and the same. When there is no activity of any kind, that is the state of the absolute Brahman, but where there are efforts of evolution and involution, there is the manifestation of the Divine Mother. When the water of the ocean is calm without any waves or ripples, then it is the state of the Absolute. When the water is in motion and with waves, then it is the state of the creative Energy or Divine Mother. So the Divine Mother is both with form (*sākāra*) and without form (*nirākāra*). The Brahman shines sometimes with form and attributes and sometimes without form and attribute.'

'You have faith in the formless Divinity', said Sri Ramakrishna, 'and, therefore, you can think of my Mother as formless. When your faith is firm, the Divine Mother will show you how she is. Then you will know that it is not that she is only the absolute existence. She will come to you and speak to you. Have faith in Her, and you will get everything. If you have faith in the formless Divinity, you must make that faith as firm as a rock. But do not be dogmatic. You must never dogmatize your faith (*patwari buddhi*) about God. You must not say that He is like this and not like anything else. Rather you say: 'I believe in the formless Divinity, but what else He is, is known to Him only. I do not know, I cannot understand'. A man of unmanifested intellect (*him buddhur loka*) cannot grasp the whole nature of God. A vessel that can hold a pound of water only, how can it contain four pounds of water? If God reveals Himself to one by His



grace and makes one understand His nature, then one realizes Him, and not till then. Therefore, the Absolute and the Divine Energy are one and the same."<sup>10</sup>

Bijay asked Bhagavan again: 'How can we attain to the vision of the Divine Mother as well as the realization of the Absolute?' SRI RAMAKRISHNA answered: '\* \* When the heart (*chitta* or *antahkarana*) will be purified (*shuddha*), then you will see the reflection of the transcendental Divine Sun \* \* As long as the sun is to be seen on the water of the ego and there remains no other means of getting a view of the real sun, so long the reflected image of the sun should be considered as real. As long as the ego (*aham*) is considered to be real, so long the reflected image of the sun will seem to be real, *not partially but absolutely*. That revealed image of the sun is the Divine Mother. If you wish to reach the absolute Brahman which is impersonal and without all attributes, then start from the reflected image, and march onward towards the real sun. The personal God, or the personal Brahman with attributes, is the One who listens to prayers (of the devotees). So pray to Him, and He will grant you the highest wisdom, *because the same personal God has also the impersonal aspect which is the real and absolute Brahman*. The Divine Energy, which is the Mother of the universe, is *another aspect of the same absolute (transcending) Brahman*. All these differences merge into absolute oneness. As the Mother can grant the *brahmajnana* or the knowledge of the Absolute, so can grant also true devotion and absolute love \* \* Light the candle of divine wisdom in the innermost chamber of your heart and by that light see the face of my absolute Mother (*Brahmamayeer-mukha dyākhanā*) and by that light you will see (realize) also the true nature of your real Self, the *Atman*."<sup>11</sup>

Now, one should mark the words of SRI RAMAKRISHNA: "But do not be dogmatic, you must never dogmatize your faith about God. You must not say that He is like this and not like anything else. You may say, I believe in the formless Divinity, but what else He is, is known to Him only. I do

<sup>10</sup> Vide *Ramakrishna Kathamrita*, 14th Edition, p. 191.

<sup>11</sup> Vide Swami Abhedananda *Memoirs of Ramakrishna*, 2nd Edition, pp. 280-282, and *Ramakrishna-Kathamrita*, 14th Edition, p. 198.

not know, I cannot understand. A man of small intellect cannot grasp the whole nature of God. Now, the following works of the Master remind us of his example of the Brahman-knowledge of men inside the boundary of the wall. Sri Ramakrishna said, "What the Absolute is, no one can tell. He who has attained the absolute knowledge, cannot give information about it. As for example, four travellers discovered a place enclosed by a high wall, with no opening anywhere. They were very anxious to see what was inside. So one of them climbed up to the top of the wall and as he looked in, he shouted with amazement and joy—'ha! ha! ha!', and without giving any information to his fellow-travellers, he jumped inside. The others did likewise. Whoever climbs up to the top of the wall, jumps inside with extreme joy and never comes back to give the news of what he has found. Such is the realm of the Absolute"<sup>12</sup>. Men who jumped inside the wall, came to know that they are on the gate-way of *brahmanana*, and besides it, there are many things to be realized about the Brahman. So Ramakrishna was quite right that the Brahman cannot be said, it is like this and that, or not like anything. The Brahman cannot be definitely said like this or that, it is above all conclusions and all opinions. Sri Ramakrishna forwarded a genuine example of it, when he said "People dispute among themselves, saying God is personal with form. He cannot be impersonal and formless. When realization comes, then all these questions are settled. He who has seen God, can tell exactly what He is like. \* \* He is with form, yet He is formless. He is personal, yet He is impersonal and who can say what other aspects He may have"<sup>13</sup>. Then Sri Ramakrishna gave an example of the four blind men who went to see an elephant and began to quarrel among them for the definite shape of the elephant, and at last they came to know that the elephant has been seen by them from different angles, but the elephant is one and the same animal. "In the same manner", said Sri Ramakrishna, "do those sectarians quarrel who have seen only one aspect of the Deity. He

<sup>12</sup> Vide Swami Abhedananda *Memours of Ramakrishna*, 2nd Edition, 1957, pp 208-209

<sup>13</sup> Vide *Memots of Ramakrishna*, p 23

alone who has seen God in all His aspects, can settle all disputes"<sup>14</sup>

So it can be said that Śrī Ramakrishna did neither condemn the attribute of indeterminateness, nor that of determinateness, rather he regarded both the attributes as real and useful for different Sadhakas of different tastes and temperaments. As for example, one day, in winter, a certain householder disciple who was a college professor, came to see Śrī Ramakrishna at Dakshineswar. Śrī Ramakrishna was seated on the outside *verandāh* of his room which faced the Ganges, and he asked the professor "Do you prefer to meditate on God with form or without form (*sākāra* or *nirākāra*)?" The disciple hesitated and answered "I prefer to meditate upon God as the formless Being rather than as a Being with form." Śrī Ramakrishna replied "That is good. There is no harm in looking at Him from this or other point of view. Yes, to think of Him as the formless Being is quite right. But do not go away with the idea that that alone is true and that all else is false. Meditation upon Him as a Being with form is equally right. You, however, must hold on to your particular conception of God until you have realized and seen God."

From this it is understood that when Divine realization of the absolute Brahman dawns upon a man and his nescience or *ajñāna* is entirely replaced by the *brahmajñāna*, he comes to know that the Brahman with form and the Brahman without form are one and the same Brahman, and it is looked as different only from different angles of vision, but, in truth, both the manifestations of the Brahman, *sākāra* and *nirākāra*, are real and beneficial to both classes of devotee. Śrī Ramakrishna said that dispute and doubt arise when there reigns ignorance or nescience and liberal and broad vision is overshadowed by the narrow sectarian ideas. As for example, the followers of non-dualism will argue that if the absolute Brahman alone is real, then its manifestation must not be real because two realities reduce everything into duality, therefore, the absolute transcendent Brahman is only real and everything

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, pp. 23-24

<sup>15</sup> This instruction was given to Śrī Ma or Mahendra Nath Gupta, the author of the *Śrī Ramakrishna-Kathamrita*,

other than it, is unreal. To this Sri Ramakrishna said "Yes, to think of Him as the formless Being is quite right, but do not go away with the idea that that alone is true and that all else is false." In fact, Sri Ramakrishna maintained that the same transcendent Brahman assumes both the aspects of form and quality (*ākāra* and *saguna*) and formlessness and qualitylessness (*nirākāra* and *nirguna*). So both the aspects of the Brahman are real.

Further it can be asked in this connection that if we admit the immanent aspect of the transcendent Brahman as real, being the replica of the Reality, there may arise the doctrine of qualified non-dualism (*vishistadvaitavada*), as advocated by Yamunacharya, Ramanuja and other Vaishnava philosophers, and as Sri Ramakrishna admitted the reality of the individual souls and phenomenal universe, so his religio-philosophical viewpoint will ring on the same harp of qualified non-dualism. But that is not correct. Because Yamunacharya, Ramanuja, and other Vaishnava philosophers admitted three prime Principles like *Ishvara*, *jiva* and *jagat* (God, individual soul and phenomenal universe) as real, but yet those are different from one another. Ramanuja and other Vaishnavacharyas say that *Ishvara* is the undivided whole (*purna*), whereas *jiva* and the individual souls are the parts (*amshas*) of the Divine Lord, and the Lord (*Ishvara*) creates the world for His sportive play. But Sri Ramakrishna's view is quite different from them. Sri Ramakrishna maintained that the indeterminate absolute Brahman assumes its replica of the determinate immanent Brahman which means the formless Brahman appears as the Brahman with form, which is no other than the manifestations of the individual souls and the world (*jiva* and *jagat*). This replica of the determinate Brahman can be known as dynamic divine Energy or *Sakti*, being the manifested form of the static and immutable Brahman, and the replica of the manifestation of the individual souls and the world is the dynamic divine Energy of the absolute Reality, so it is real and divine, and not unreal, as has been said by the non-dualist Sankara and the Sankarites. Sri Ramakrishna's real contention is this that the one and secondless Brahman reveals itself as the indeterminate (*nirguna*) Brahman without form as well as the determinate (*saguna*) Brahman with form (if it desires). Essence

or Reality is one and the same, they only differ in their names and forms, as the same snake is known as static when it remains without motion, and as dynamic when it moves with motion. In fact, both the forms of the Brahman are real and, at the same time, are non-different or inseparable from each other. Sri Ramakrishna explained this idea of non-difference or inseparability by the example of fire and its burning power, or by that of the sun and its rays, or the motionless calm sea and its waves. Therefore, we should not be confounded with the idea of the doctrine of the qualified non-dualism (*vishistadvaitavada*) which is mistakenly imposed upon Sri Ramakrishna's viewpoint. It should be noted further that Sri Ramakrishna did not mean by the examples of fire and its burning power the substance and its attributes or the relation of the quality and the qualified (*guna-guni-sambandha*) between them, but he said that the example of fire has been used to mean the static and indeterminate aspect of the Brahman and the burning power to mean the dynamic and determinate aspect of the same Brahman. The Reality being the same, does not, therefore, differ by the assuming forms and names. Again we come to know from the life-story of Swami Turyananda that he used to meet Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa at Dakshineswar Temple from time to time (probably in 1878 or 1879). One day Swami Turyananda went to Dakshineswar Temple, and noticed that Sri Ramakrishna was requesting a Pandit to say something about Vedanta. The Pandit agreed to explain some thoughts on Advaita Vedanta to Sri Ramakrishna. On hearing Vedantic sayings, Sri Ramakrishna spoke highly about the scholarship of the Pandit, and turning to the assembled devotees he said: "But I do not like to hear so many things (i.e., so many discussions of Vedanta). I like to think that my Mother is there. My Mother Kali exists and I am (exist) with my Mother. It is good no doubt that you discuss about so many great (serious) subjects like the tripartite categories (*triputi*) of knowledge, the object of knowledge, and the knower and also meditation, the object of meditation, and the meditator (*jñāna-jñeya-jñātā, dhyāna-dhyeya-dhyātā*) of Vedanta. As regards myself I like to think that my Mother is there and I am with my Mother, and no one and no other things exist." That day

the indication of 'I and my Mother exist' spoken by Śrī Ramakrishna appeared to Haimath (Swami Turiyananda) very simple and more sweet and lucid, and clearly understood the real essence of the Vedantic teachings. Haimath understood that the very utterance of Śrī Ramakrishna should be followed in practical life.

Now it should be asked as to what is the real contention of Śrī Ramakrishna's utterance. Really Śrī Ramakrishna did not admit that the transcendental Reality or the indeterminate Brahman (*nirguna*-Brahman) is only real and the phenomenal world-appearance is false (*brahman satya jaganmuthya*), but maintained the view that the same unique and secondless Brahman appears as both determinate and personal (*saguna* and *sākāra*) and indeterminate and impersonal (*nirguna* and *nirākāra*) at its sweet will. The two orders of Reality, the *nirguna* and the *saguna*—Śiva and Śakti—the Brahman and Kālī—are, in essence, one and the same, and they appear as different only in their names and forms, i.e., in manifestations.

A similar instance can be given from a song of Sadhaka Ramaprasad, the great mystic poet of Bengal, though Ramaprasad's doctrinal view does not subscribe to Vedantic monism. Ramaprasad sang

'Ke jānere Kālī kyāman,  
 Shad-darshane nā pāya darsan,  
 Kālī padma-vane hamsī-rupe hamsa-sane kare raman  
 \* \* \* \*

Atmārāmer ātma Kālī, pramāna pranaver matan'

Ramaprasad said that the six systems of philosophy fail to determine the real entity as well as essence of Kālī, the dynamic aspect of the Paramasīva, or the absolute Brahman. Ramaprasad described the polarised consciousness of 'It' and 'I' (*Idam* and *Aham*), the coupled state (*mithuna-avasthā*) of Śiva and Śakti like a combined positive and negative parts of a pea in the core of the highest thousand petalled lotus (*sahasrara-padma*). "*padma-vane hamsī-rupe hamsa-sane kare ramana*" This is purely the Tantric monism (*śaktiśiṣṭa advaita*). The last line of the song, '*ātmārāmer ātmā kālī pramāna pranaver matan*', i.e., Kālī, the Divine Energy or the phenomenal world with the individual souls, is the *Atman*, or forms the central part or core of the *Ātmārāma*,

the Parama-Brahman as the *Pranava*, the mystic word, OM, is the prime indicator or symbol of the *nirguna*-Brahman. Kali can be compared with the *saguna*-Brahman *Pianava* (*tasya vāchakah pranavah*) Advaita Vedanta and the *logadarshana* of Patanjali admit that the determinate (*saguna*) Brahman is the indicator or discloser of the real status of the indeterminate (*nirguna*) Brahman. The real contention of Sadhaka Ramaprasad's song is that he recognized Mother Kali (the *saguna*-Brahman) as a manifested aspect of the Parama-Siva (the *nirguna*-Brahman), and this truth he expressed in a line of one of his songs

कालि ब्रह्म जेने मर्म,

(आमि) धर्माधर्म सब छेड़ेड़ि ।

That is, 'I have given up all merits and demerits (*samskaras* of different actions) by realizing that Kali, the Divine Mother, (determinate Brahman) is no other than the indeterminate Brahman. Some say that this Brahman (of Ramaprasad) is not the absolute Brahman as described by Advaita Vedanta, but it is the Siva or Parama-Siva, the static aspect of the Siva, who co-exists with the dynamic Sakti, or it is the polarized I-consciousness and It-consciousness. Tantra calls this state of identification on polarization as non-difference. But this state of Tantric non-difference is not the same as Vedantic non-difference, because Advaita Vedanta says that the absolute transcendental Brahman exists as one without the second, whereas Tantra maintains that the transcendental Siva or Brahman exists with Sakti as one without the second. In Tantra, both the Siva-consciousness and the Sakti-consciousness are real, and are non-different from each other in the state of highest communion (*parama-mithuna*). So the state of one without the second, as described in Advaita Vedanta, is not equal to the state of one without the second as described in Tantra. In fact, the Brahman as believed by Sadhaka Ramaprasad is qualified with the causal and unmanifested Sakti, which can be reduced to Tantric monism. But Sri Ramakrishna's Brahman is quite different, being raised above the state of identification or polarization of the two prime principles which shine as *two orders* of Reality. Sri Ramakrishna's Brahman *appears* as two orders of Reality,

*saguna* and *sākāra*-Brahman and *nuguna* and *nirākāra*-Brahman, considering from its manifestation or immanent aspect, otherwise, in essence, they are one and the same

Now, we find that Śrī Ramakrishna's absolute Brahman and the world-appearance differ from the Absolute and appearance as described by the non-dualist Sankara. Because, Śrī Ramakrishna said that the transcending Brahman *assumes* both the forms and names of the indeterminate (*nirguna*) and the determinate (*saguna*) Brahman, and when the Brahman shines as inactive and immute, it shines above nescience or *maya*, and when it is active, it plays the role of the sportive play of the world-appearance and its beings, and, therefore, the world-appearance with all its objects, being the counterpart of the real *nirguna*-Brahman, is not non-existent and unreal

Śrī Ramakrishna's non-dual absolute Brahman differs somewhat from that of the Tantra philosophy. Because, according to Tantra, Śakti or Kālī is the active or dynamic aspect or state of static Śiva, and while Śakti is active, she appears as different from Śiva. In Tantra, Śakti is known as the *Idam* or It-consciousness and Śiva as the *Aham* or I-consciousness and both the consciousnesses shine as an undivided one consciousness. In fact, they exist as different from each other even when they appear as non-different like a whole pea (*chanaka*) composed of positive and negative parts in time of Divine communion (*mithunāśvasthā*). Śakti plays the role of personal God, who does His duties of projection, preservation and destruction, shining as real and non-different in essence from the secondless and attributeless unique Brahman. Therefore, it is true that Śrī Ramakrishna's viewpoint is somewhat different from that of Tantra. Śrī Ramakrishna said that though the formless *nirguna*-Brahman *assumes* the form of the *saguna*-Brahman, which is known as Śakti, yet the *saguna* Brahman, being the counterpart is non-different from the *nirguna*-Brahman, which is known as Śiva or Parama-Śiva in Tantra. Therefore, Śrī Ramakrishna's Brahman and Śakti are one and the same, though they appear as different in the time of activity or *līlā*

Śrī Ramakrishna's absolute Brahman is again different



from that of Ramanuja, Madhva, Nimvarka, Chaitanya, Srikantha, Srikara, Valadeva Vidyabhusana, and others, because, Sri Ramakrishna's Brahman is not a composite body of God, the individual souls, and the world (*Isvara, jiva* and *jagat*), but it assumes the forms of God, the individual souls, and the world and at the same time remains unaffected by the changes of names and forms. Sri Ramakrishna forwarded an example of the Bel-fruit, while explaining to Naiendranath (Swami Vivekananda) about the standpoint of the doctrine of qualified non-dualism or *vishistadvaitavada* which has already been discussed before.<sup>15</sup> There Sri Ramakrishna said "The Absolute (Brahman) must not be considered as different from the world and the soul. Because these three form one, three in one and one in three. Let us take a Bel-fruit. Let the shell, the seeds, and the kernel (*khola, vichu* and *shānsa*) be kept separate. The shell, the seed, and the kernel are all weighed with a view to getting the real weight of the fruit. • • Hence said Ramanuja that the Absolute Brahman is qualified by the finite souls and the phenomenal world, which is the doctrine of qualified non-dualistic Vedānta."<sup>16</sup> But it should be remembered that this example of the Bel-fruit is neither the final conclusion of Sri Ramakrishna's philosophical viewpoint, nor the highest criterion of truth. Because we find (in the *Kathamrita* by 'M') that Sri Ramakrishna did never go against any personal faith or belief of any Bhakta or devotee, rather he used to deliver different teachings in different times to suite the taste and temperament of different peoples of different creeds and doctrines. And it should be remembered that Sri Ramakrishna's doctrinal motto is '*yata mata tata path*', i.e., 'methods of spiritual practice may differ for different beliefs or faiths or creeds, but the goal is one and the same'. He delivered his teachings of *bhakti, jnana, yoga* and *karma* and advised the devotees to choose any one of them, that will suit their taste and likings. He told the spiritual seekers to select the *alternative path* and not to mix up one with the other, or not to synthesise all faiths into one

<sup>15</sup> Vide *Memoirs of Ramakrishna*, 2nd Edition, 1957, pp. 304-305.

<sup>16</sup> Vide *Memoirs of Ramakrishna*, 2nd Edition, p. 302, vide also *Kathamrita*, Vol. I, 14th Edition, 1348 BS, pp. 238-239.

practice He said that all faiths, *dvaita*, *vishistadvaita*, *saktadvaita*, *advaita*, lead to the same goal, though they differ in creeds, paraphernalias, and methods Sri Ramakrishna's universal saying '*yata mata tata patha*' suggests the suitable *alternative path* or practice for attaining to one and the same Godconsciousness, which is the *summum bonum* of human life

Again, if we critically analyse Sri Ramakrishna's universal religion and philosophical-cum-spiritual viewpoint, we will find that his absolute Brahman will neither be regarded as the Absolute of Madhya, nor of Nimvarka, nor of others. Because Madhya made his absolute Brahman quite different from the individual souls and the world. Nimvarka also explained the Brahman as both different and non-different (*bhedabheda*), or as both immanent and transcendent (*ishva-bhuta* and *vishvotirna*). But Sri Ramakrishna made his Brahman absolutely non-different as one without the second, though it manifests sometimes as *saguna* and sometimes as *nirguna*, sometimes as immanent, and sometimes as transcendent. In fact, the adjuncts of attributes, *saguna* and *nirguna*, cannot affect the Brahman, which is one and the same. The attributeless or *nirguna* Brahman appears also as the attributed or *saguna* Brahman, for the sportive play of projection, preservation, and destruction of the world-appearance, but, in reality, there shines the same absolute Brahman. Or it can be said that when the Brahman takes form and name of immanent *saguna*-Brahman, it is known as Brahmanamayee Sakti and when it shines as formless and nameless, it is known as *nishkala nirvikalpa* Siva. But, in reality, Sakti and Siva are one and the same supreme principle.

#### IV

Now, to discuss about the philosophical viewpoint of Swami Abhedananda it can be said that his viewpoint of philosophy is also tuned with the philosophical viewpoint of Sri Ramakrishna. He dedicated his life for the cause of unparalleled universal ideal of his wonderful Master, Sri

Ramakrishna He preached the gospel of Truth in the West as well as in the East through the medium of Vedanta, but his thoughts and ideas were moulded and fused by the Saint of Dakshineswar. He was in close touch with the thoughts and ideas of Sri Ramakrishna for a long time and at the same time he had great regard and respect for all schools of Vedanta as well as other schools of thought. Specially his mind was fully saturated with the most rational and philosophical thoughts of Sankara. Like Sankara and his Master, Sri Ramakrishna, he did not deny the relative and apparent existence (*apeshika* and *vyavaharika sattva*) of the phenomenal universe, and at the same time if we critically examine the writings and thoughts of Swami Abhedananda, we will find that his thoughts on philosophy and religion were not merely the echo of those of Sankara, and we find in them a new orientation. We find in them some new and novel trends of thought and idea which are found in the religious and philosophical ideas of his Master, Sri Ramakrishna. Paramahansa

Some special and novel feature of Swami Abhedananda's philosophy is clear when he said "Although monistic Vedanta has united heaven and earth, God and man, and the Brahman and the *Atman*, yet it has destroyed or denied nothing in the phenomenal world. Starting from the ultimate conclusions of ancient and modern sciences it says that the absolute Truth is one and not many, *yet there can be varieties of expression and manifold manifestations* of the one Truth"<sup>1</sup> Further, he added "Because all these names and forms are produced by *maya*, the inscrutable power of the Brahman *It (this maya) is inseparable from the Brahman, as the power of burning is inseparable from fire*" Sri Ramakrishna's philosophy also explains that Sakti and Saktiman are inseparable like the inseparability of fire and its burning power. We have already discussed and Sri Ramakrishna himself also forwarded an example of the moving snake and the motionless snake, which are, in truth, one and the same. He gave further an example of a salt-doll which lost its total existence when it attempted to measure

<sup>1</sup> Vide *Hindu Philosophy of India* (vide The Complete Works)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

the depth of the fathomless ocean. But it is a fact that when the salt-doll dissolves away in water of the ocean, it retains its existence in water in causal form, because water is felt salty when tasted. So this example does not strictly suit for conveying the idea of non-dualism or Advaita, rather it signifies the idea of qualified non-dualism or *vishvadvaita*.<sup>3</sup> So the real meaning or significance that is conveyed by the example of the salt-doll is that in the apperception of the highest truth (*brahmanubhuti*), there remains no dual existence between the *jiva* and the Brahman, between the qualities of determinateness and indeterminateness, but the apparent phenomenal names and forms are totally negated, or lost their existence, and there remains only the unparallelled one and unique experience of the Brahman, which cannot be expressed by words and thoughts. Now, if we critically examine the particular saying of Śrī Rāmakoṣṭha 'Sakti and Saktiman are inseparable' or "Kali is the counterpart of Siva" along with the comment by Swami Abhedananda "It (*maya* the inscrutable power of Brahman) is inseparable from the Brahman, as the power of burning (*dāhukā-sakti*) is inseparable from fire (*agni*)", then we will find that one and the same Brahman appears as *saguna* or *nirguna* for the sake of its inscrutable and unspeakable (*anurvacaniya*) *mayasakti*, which causes it to play the role of the world-appearance, and this play appears as real so long as there remains the act of evolution (*srsti*). The *Upanishad* says '*tat srstvā tadevānu-pravishat*', i.e. 'the Brahman enters into the world and takes the form of the world-appearance' and for this act of entering or assuming, the Brahman is not affected. So Śrī Rāmakoṣṭha's and also Abhedananda's novel non-dualistic philosophy is clearly understood when it explains that the reflection (*pratvimba*) and the object of reflection (*vimba*) are one and the same (Sankara calls the *vimba*, real and the *pratvimba*, unreal). Swami Abhedananda admitted this identity of the *vimba* and *pratvimba*, while he said "But as a reflection cannot exist

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<sup>3</sup> The similar doctrine of *vishvadvaita* we find in F. H. Bradley's philosophy which concludes that its all-inclusive Absolute fully shines with the transmuted absorbed ingredients of everything phenomenal and mental.

independent of the light whose reflection it is, so the soul of man cannot exist independent of the *Atman*”<sup>4</sup> Further, the Swami said “As the image or reflection of the sun cannot exist for a second independent of that self-luminous heavenly body, so the individual soul, being the image of God, cannot exist even for a moment without depending upon the Divine Principle”<sup>5</sup> For this reason, Sri Ramakrishna’s Bhavatarini (of Dakshineswar), nay, the universal Mahamaya Adyasakti, is the Brahman Himself. She appears as Bhavatarini or Adyasakti, for the cause of Her Divine play or *lila* and also for the good of mankind, otherwise She shines as the pure Brahman which transcends the forms and categories of the individual souls and phenomenal universe (*jiva* and *jagat*). We do not find any anomaly or inconsistency in this identification, although the pure Brahman takes part in the dramatic performance of the world with double role. Similarly, it will not be difficult to identify one and the same Brahman when it appears as the *nirguna*-Brahman without name and form (*namarupa*) or the *saguna*-Brahman with name and form. As the changes of dress and make up do not affect the identity of a player, so the attributes or adjuncts (*maya*) do not affect the identification, i.e., essence of the pure transcending Brahman. Sri Ramakrishna’s religion and philosophy sing this universal song of non-duality and inseparability.

We have discussed about some of the tenets of philosophy or philosophical ideas of Swami Abhedananda along with those of his Master, and have shown their real significance. Swami Abhedananda’s cultural, educational, social, political, historical, aesthetic, religious and philosophical thoughts or ideas are imprinted in his numerous speeches and lectures, delivered in London, America, and different Continents and different places of India, and some of them have already been published in book forms. All his lectures are now published in his *Complete Works*. His thoughtful and inspiring lectures-cum-books will undoubtedly prove his profound scholarship and deep penetrating knowledge in various subjects with his

<sup>4</sup> Vide *Divine Heritage of Man*, p. 141

<sup>5</sup> Vide *Ibid*, pp. 213-214

definite religious and philosophical viewpoint along with his charming magnetic personality Dr Satkari Mukherjee, one of the Indian philosophers of the first rank, gave some tribute to Swami Abhedananda, where he said 'It is an uphill task to undertake the evolution of the philosophy of Swami Abhedananda. In him, Sankaras Monistic Vedanta (Advaita Vedanta) received a new orientation. He was pre-eminently a subtle logician and his knowledge of modern science and his grasp of modern trends of thought-movement enabled him to put on an unassailable basis of the truths of Vedanta and make them intelligible to the modern mind. It was natural that he won the unstinted admiration and appreciation of the learned world. Scholars and thinkers were compelled to recognize the force of his logic, even when they followed their own lines of thought. Swami's spirituality was shot through and through by his intellectuality like Sankaracharya's. As is the case with Sankaracharya, the student, who reads his *Bhasyas* with their arrays of arguments supported by incisive logic and then relentless criticism of rival systems of thought, is tempted to believe that the philosopher as Sankara was greater than the man of realization. Such is also the case with Swami Abhedananda. He strikes the students of philosophy as a philosopher out and out, yes, it is undeniable that philosophy is the element in which Swami Abhedananda's genius shines most prominently. But one must not lose sight of the truth that the strength of his philosophy is not derived from the intellectual resources, but has at its back the realization of a Yogi.

"It is not possible for many of us to take a full measure of the whole personality the great Swami Abhedananda possessed. We are bound to approach him from definite angle of view and there is nothing strange in the fact that the Swami is regarded as a philosopher and thinker of a high order, as a man of stupendous scholarship, and as a great Seer and a man of spiritual illumination. He was all these and much more than our intellect can fathom."<sup>5</sup>

Really Swami Abhedananda's religion and philosophy

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<sup>5</sup> Prajnanananda *Abhedananda-darshana* (Bengali, 1st Edition), p. 232.

breathe a living spirit and inspiration, bearing a new and universal outlook. And it is true that he and his revered predecessor, Swami Vivekananda, interpreted and preached their Master's sublime ideas and ideal to the world.

## V

Sri Ramakrishna had regard and respect for all kinds of spiritual *sadhana*s as described in the Vedas, Puranas, Tantras, Vaishnava scriptures, Yogasutras as well as described by the Buddhists, Jains, Mohammedans, Christians and other nations. He not only tried to synthesise different religious faiths and spiritual practices, but also advised all to select and adopt an *alternative* (i.e. either this or that) faith and practice with an idea that all faiths and doctrines are helpful and lead the sincere seekers after Truth to the same goal of God-realization. The methods of *sadhana*s and religious faiths and creeds may differ from one another, but the ultimate goal of all are one and the same. Swami Vivekananda and Swami Abhedananda, nay, all the disciples of inner circle (*antaranga*) of Sri Ramakrishna realized true spirit of their Master's universal teachings, and preached their Master's sayings or teachings all over the world, which will bring a harmony and peace among all nations. While discussing the attitude of Vedanta towards religion, Swami Abhedananda said "Therefore, unity in variety is the fundamental principle of Vedanta philosophy. We must strive to see oneness which underlies the diversified phenomena of the universe. Our aim should be to unify all these different manifestations into that one absolute Being and to make so many phenomena into one undivided mass of Reality"<sup>1</sup> From this it is understood that Swami Abhedananda admitted like his Master different stages of spiritual *sadhana* for the attainment of one and the same Godconsciousness. The Swami also described these stages which are regarded as different grades of evolution in one's spiritual progress. Furthermore he said

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<sup>1</sup> Vide *Attitude of Vedanta towards Religions* (1st Edition), p. 2

that the followers of Jnana Yoga or Advaita *sadhana* with *viveka* and *vichara* are very rare, so different methods of *sadhana* are prescribed for different kinds of Sadhaka. Sri Krishna said in the *Bhagavad Gita* (VIII 3)

मनुष्याणां सहस्रेषु कश्चित् यतति सिद्धये ।

यततामपि सिद्धानां कश्चिन्मां वेत्ति तत्त्वतः ॥

The words '*vetti tattvatah*' imply the idea of correct understanding and immediate knowledge of the absolute Reality. The contention of this verse is that to realize the unique Brahman is very difficult, and men of realization are also rare. Regarding realization, Swami Abhedananda said that knowledge of the Brahman is something more than ordinary knowledge, so it connotes the idea of being and becoming one with the Infinite. This realization through Advaita *sadhana* is not very easy for all men and so *alternative* paths or methods with an universal outlook and spirit of amity have been prescribed according to different tastes, temperaments and capacities of the Sadhakas. Swami Abhedananda said "Before we understand what the Absolute is, we must pass through different stages of evolution in our spiritual progress. First of all we start from the gross physical body and its relation to the universe. Then gradually we go inward towards the centre. We rise still higher and reach the stage of qualified non-dualistic conception of God, i.e., conception of harmonizing God, the individual soul and the world, and at last we reach the final stage of non-dualistic or Advaitic conception of God or the Absolute which transcends the categories of time, space and causation." Further he said "Therefore, the monistic thinkers who are the sincere and earnest seekers after the Absolute, do not stop in dualism, do not stop in qualified non-dualism, but want to go deeper and still further, and try to find out the absolute Truth which is beyond all changes and all relations." Therefore, the Swami did not discard any of them, but said that they are the *alternative* doctrines and paths to reach the same goal.

Here we find a new solution of some different problems in the field of spiritual *sadhana*, because different men are possessed of different tastes and temperaments, and it is



natural that they select their spiritual ideals according to their tastes and tendencies. So it will not be wise to prescribe a marked or chalked out path or method for all. Swami Abhedananda was also in favour of *alternative* paths and practices, so he advised the sincere seekers after Truth to begin their *sadhanas* from the lower to the higher order, from the dualistic conception of God to the non dualistic one, and told them not to stop until the goal is reached. So we find that the Swami Abhedananda admitted all the stages of dualism, qualified non-dualism and monism or non-dualism in the way of attainment of God-realization. We know that Sankara prescribed some *pratika-upasanas* as a means to the goal, but yet he did not recognize those means or mediums as real and essential. Swami Abhedananda also admitted the utility of some symbols as a means to spiritual *sadhana* in order to reach the ultimate goal of non-dualistic conception of the Absolute, and at the same time he said that a medium is not the ultimate end, but is only a means to an end.

Now, before representing Swami Abhedananda's interpretation of *maya*, let us discuss about the stuff of unreality (*mithya*), which has been explained by Sri Ramakrishna. It is said in the *Kathamrita*<sup>1</sup> that Baikuntha, the brother of Jayagopal, asked the Master "Sir, is the world (*samsara*) unreal (*mithya*)?" Sri Ramakrishna answered "As long as God is not realized, the world appears as unreal. Then men ignorantly think everything in this world as his own \* \* \* As the world is constantly changing, so it is unreal \* \* \* Because when you will realize the Brahman, the world does not appear as unreal \* \* \* Because he who has realized Him (the Brahman), sees that He (the Brahman) Himself has been manifested as the individual souls (*jiva*) and the phenomenal world (*jagat*)". Further he said "As long as God is not realized so long everything is discriminated by saying 'not this, not this (*neti, neti*)', but when God is realized, the enlightened man comes to know that God has been manifested as all. Then he realizes that *Isvara*, *maya*, *jiva*, and *jagat*—all are nothing but God the Absolute \* \* \* Therefore, the

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<sup>1</sup> Vol. I, 14th Edition pp. 130-32.

phenomenal world (*lila*) and the Absolute (*nitya*) are inseparable, or it can be said that who appears as God, he also takes the forms of the individual souls and the world.<sup>3</sup> Though Master Mahashaya (Sri M) sometimes said that these sayings of Sri Ramakrishna sing the doctrine of qualified non-dualism (*vishistadvaita*) of Ramanuja, yet from the teachings of the Master it appears very clear that his sayings sing the song of Advaita with a new outlook. It has been said before that Sri Ramakrishna said

‘यतक्षण तौके (ईश्वरके) ना जाना याय, ततक्षण (संसार बा जगत्) मिथ्या  
(किना चलमान बा परिवर्तनशील)। \* \* तौके (ईश्वरके) जेने ससार करले  
(ससार) अनित्य नय ।’

That is, as long as God is not known, so long the world appears as unreal. \* \* But when God is known, the world does not appear as unreal or false. Here, according to Sri Ramakrishna, so-called unreality of the world appears for the non-knowledge of God or Brahman, and knowledge of God or Brahman removes the idea of unreality, i.e., falsity of the world-appearance, because after Divine realization, said Sri Ramakrishna, the enlightened soul sees and feels that every atoms and molecules of the universe are covered by the Brahman ‘*ishā vāsyamudam sarvam*’. Therefore, the Brahman appears everywhere in this universe as matter and spirit, and when Divine realization comes, the notion of unreality vanishes. So, according to Sri Ramakrishna, unreality or false knowledge (*mithya-jnana* or *maya*) depends upon, or is related to, non-knowledge of the Brahman. But Sankara said that the world of appearance seems real so long as the Brahman is not realized, but after realization the world appears as false or unreal. It is a fact that Sri Ramakrishna’s God-vision is different from that of Sankara.

Swami Abhedananda’s interpretation of unreality or *maya* somewhat differs from that which has been given by his Master, Sri Ramakrishna. Like Sankara and other Advaita philosophers Swami Abhedananda discussed *maya* or unreality along with the law of cause and sequence, the idea of sub-

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p 134

stratum (*adhithana*) of the world-appearance and also the problems of space, time and causation, in a conventional way, as well as from the viewpoint of modern science. He raised a question as to what is the real nature of *maya*, and said 'Is *maya* separable from that infinite source of wisdom? No, it is *inseparable* (from wisdom). As the burning power of fire or heat cannot be separated from fire itself, so *maya*, the will-power of the Lord, is inseparable from the ocean of wisdom, which is called the Brahman'.<sup>4</sup> Further he added 'Now we have found the infinite ocean of wisdom is in one side, and *maya* or will-power, which is known as the nature or *Prakriti*, is on the other side, and when we combine these two and consider these two as one, we get *Isvara*, the personal God (*saguna*-Brahman), as the projector, preserver, and destroyer of the universe \* \* In fact, they are all inseparable from the infinite Brahman'.<sup>5</sup> Here we find that Swami Abhedananda explained *maya* as an inscrutable power, or an inseparable divine Energy of the world essence Brahman, as has been explained by his Master Sri Ramakrishna. While explaining the real nature of *maya*, Swami Abhedananda mentioned about the dual aspect of the Brahman, and at the same time said that this dual aspect is absolutely assuming, as, in essence, these two aspects belong to one and the same Brahman. These two aspects of the Brahman, he said, are accepted or recognized only for the manifestation (*sristi*) of the phenomenal universe, which can be said to be sportive play (*lila*) of the Brahman, or of the divine Energy. Sri Ramakrishna also said that *maya* or divine Energy is Brahmanavce—*Lilamayee*.

Swami Abhedananda discussed about *maya* in his different writings somewhat in a different way. As for example, in the same book, *Vedanta towards Religion*, the Swami said "But

<sup>4</sup> Vide *Attitude of Vedanta towards Religion*, p. 15.

<sup>5</sup> Vide *Ibid*, p. 15.

<sup>6</sup> Sankara sang the same song when he explained the theory of projection (*sristi*) of the world appearance as a sportive play of *Isvara*. Somewhere in the commentaries on the *Brahmasutras* he admitted that though the act of projection is not possible on the part of the transcending pure Brahman, yet *sristi* is admitted to realize or appreciate the sublimity and greatness of the prime-principle, Brahman. And not only that, but Sankara and the followers of the Vivarana School also regarded the pure Brahman as the locus (*ashraya* or *adhithana*) of the nescience or *maya*,

what is *maya*, I ask? Is it merely an illusion? No, it (*maya*) means *relative existence*. It means time, space, and causation. Sankaracharya defined it as inscrutable in its nature and name. It is the energy of that supreme wisdom and the Divinity. Similarly, in another place he said: What is *maya*? The power which produces these waves of phenomena, is called *maya*. This inscrutable power of *maya* dwells in the infinite ocean of Reality or Brahman from eternity to eternity. It is *inseparable* from the Divine Being as the power of burning is inseparable from fire. Sometimes this power remains latent as undifferentiated cosmic energy and sometimes it manifests itself as the various forces of nature.

It should be remembered that Swami Abhedananda, like Swami Vivekananda, differentiated the word 'delusion' from the word 'illusion', and said in the book, *Lectures in India* (1906) "*Maya* does not mean illusion. Illusion is a word wrongly adopted in translation. This word gives a false idea to the Western mind. *Maya* is the invisible Energy which is inseparable from God." Again, in the *Doctrine of Karma* he said "Delusion does not mean non-existence, it means *relative reality*, that is, it exists for the time being, and has no permanent existence. The Swami said that *maya* is relative reality and compared it with the dream state (*svapna*). He added: "Dreams are real so long as we are dreaming, but when we wake up, they become unreal." Here Swami Abhedananda explained *maya* as Swami Vivekananda explained it as 'a simple statement of facts', and not as a theory, nor as Sankara made it explicit in his commentary on the

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and, consequently, the pure or transcending Brahman is regarded (assumed) as the cause and the ground of the universe, though from the strict logic of Advaita Vedanta, the pure Brahman neither forms the cause, nor the ground of the universe.

Some of the Vedantists raised a question as to solve the mystery of the dilemma or cause and effect or seed and tree. They say that it is difficult to ascertain whether seed precedes the tree or tree precedes the seed, as a tree cannot come out without a seed, and similarly seeds cannot grow without a tree. So seed being the cause and tree being an effect, the indeterminate Brahman is *conceived* as the prime cause and ground of the world-appearance, which is said to be an effect, so as to forward a rational explanation in respect of creation or projection of the universe.

<sup>7</sup> Vide *Doctrine of Karma*, Appendix

*Brahmasutra* (vide the *sutra* 2.1.14)

‘सर्वव्यवहारणामेव प्राग्ब्रह्मात्मविज्ञानात् सत्यस्योपपत्तेः । स्वप्नव्यवहारस्येव प्राक्प्रबोधात् । तस्मात् प्राग्ब्रह्मत्वमताप्रतिबोधादुपपन्नं सवलौकिकी वैदिकश्च व्यवहारः ।’

This example of dream has also been forwarded by Swami Abhedananda, while explaining nescience or *maya*. Like Sankara, Swami Abhedananda admitted the *apparent* phenomenal existence of the world-appearance, so long as there comes no realization of the Brahman which absolutely transcends the categories of time, space, and causation. The Swami forwarded: So the relative reality (*vyavaharika-sattvā*) is on the sense-plane, and the absolute reality (*paramarthika-satta*) is beyond time and space<sup>8</sup>. Vedanta said that the relative or apparent reality is removed or corrected by the realization of the Brahman ‘ब्रह्मज्ञानबाध्यत्वं व्यवहारिकत्वम्’, and the seeming or illusory reality is negated or nullified by the right knowledge even when nescience or *ajnana* persists in man ‘ब्रह्मज्ञानेतरबाध्यत्वं व्यवहारिकत्वम्’<sup>9</sup>. The absolute Reality is the unchangeable immortal *Atman* or Brahman.

Again Swami Abhedananda explained nescience or *maya* as an eternal inscrutable power of the Brahman. Sankara and his followers called *maya* as the power of the supreme Lord of the universe ‘अविद्यानाम्नी परमेशशक्तिः’<sup>1</sup>. By the word ‘परमेशशक्तिः’ or *sakti* Sankara meant the *jnana-sakti* of *Isvara*. To support his statement Sankara further quoted the *Svetashvatara Upanishad* (1.3) ‘देवात्मशक्तिः स्वगुणैर्निगूढाम्’ and commented ‘देवस्य द्योतनादियुक्तस्य मायिनो महेश्वरस्य परमात्मन आत्मभूतामखतन्त्राम्’ \* \* \*. Chitsukhacharya supported the view of Sankara, while he said in the *Tattvapradīpikā* ‘मायाशब्देन च परमेश्वरज्ञानशक्तौरेव तत्स्वरूपभूताया संकीर्तनात्’<sup>2</sup>. Swami Abhedananda similarly said *maya* is the invisible Energy which is inseparable from God<sup>3</sup>. In the book, *Divine Heritage of Man*, he further said “The power which produces these waves of phenomena, is called

<sup>8</sup> Vide *True Psychology*, Appendix

<sup>9</sup> *Contemporary Indian Philosophy*, 1936, p. 178

*maya* This inscrutable power of *maya* dwells in the infinite ocean of Reality<sup>10</sup> It is as inseparable from the Divine Being as the power of burning is inseparable from fire Sometimes this power remains latent as the undifferentiated cosmic Energy, and sometimes it manifests itself as the various forces of Nature<sup>11</sup> The Swami further said that *maya* or cosmic Energy dwells in *Isvara* That projection (of the world-process) from the potential state into the kinetic or active state takes place gradually through the process of evolution of *maya* or cosmic Energy, which dwells in *Isvara* of Vedanta"<sup>12</sup> It has already been said that Advaita Vedanta divided the levels of the Brahman-consciousness into four, *Turiya*, *Isvara*, *Hnanyagarbha*, and *Vibrata*, for explaining the mysterious (*anuvachaniya*) process of projection (*srsti*), and said that the causal nescience or *maya* co-exists with *Isvara*, though *Isvara* is neither contaminated nor affected by *maya* And from this conventional and imaginative Vedantic chart we know that the cosmic Energy contains all the seeds of impressions (*samaskaras*) of all incarnations of all the living beings and non-living objects of the universe, and she (Sri Ramakrishna calls Divine Mother) projects them in the time of new manifestation of the universe

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<sup>10</sup> It can be mentioned in this connection that the Vedanta philosophy has divided *maya* into two, *maya* and *avidya* Vedanta stated that *maya* co exists with *Isvara* or God, who is sum total of all individual beings, and *avidya* resides in, or co exists with, the individual soul But there is a great controversy regarding the locus of *ajnana* or *avidya* Vachaspati Mishra explained in his *Bhamati* that *ajnana* or *avidya* co exists with individual soul (*jiva*), i.e. the *jiva* is the locus of *ajnana*, whereas the Vivarana School, founded by Padmapada, the foremost disciple of Sankara, asserted that *ajnana* or *avidya* co-exists with the Brahman-consciousness (*chaitanya*), i.e. Brahman is the locus of *ajnana* or *avidya* Here we find a difference between the Schools of Vachaspati Mishra and Padmapada But it is the opinion of the author of the commentary, Gauda-brahmānanda that there remains no difference or rivalry between the *Bhamati* and the *Panchapadika-vivarana*, because though Vachaspati Mishra said that *ajnana* is *jivāśrita*, yet the *jiva* is no other than the *Brahma-chaitanya* The Vivarana also admitted the locus of *ajnana* or *avidya* as *chaitanya* So, in reality, both the Schools are not antagonistic to each other, rather they admitted that *maya*, *ajnana* or *avidya* resides in, or co exists with, the *chaitanya* or *Brahma chaitanya* (*chaitanyāśrita ajnana*)

<sup>11</sup> True Psychology, p 51.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, p 54

Now, it can be asked as to whether *Isvara* is inferior to *Turiya* or the absolute Brahman that transcends the categories of time, space, and causation. Viewing from the standpoint of strict logic of Advaita Vedanta, *Isvara* appears as inferior to the transcending Turiya or Fourth Principle, but, in essence, the *Isvara*-Brahman and the Turiya-Brahman are one and the same supreme consciousness. And from this highest viewpoint Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, Swami Abhedananda and other disciples of inner circle of Sri Ramakrishna said that "the inscrutable power of *maya* dwells in the infinite ocean of the Reality, or the Brahman, and this infinite Brahman is the pure (*shuddha*) and immute (*kutastha*) Brahman which has generally been described in Advaita Vedanta as the Turiya-Brahman or Fourth Principle. It has already been said that in the *Kathamrita* (Vol. I), Sri Ramakrishna said "Brahman and Kali are one and the same, as fire and its burning power are inseparable. If we think about or admit fire, we automatically think about or admit its burning power. Similarly, when we admit Kali, we automatically admit the Brahman (here 'Brahman' means the absolute pure and immute or *kutastha* Brahman), and *vice versa*. The sun cannot be imagined without its rays. Therefore, the Brahman and Sakti are inseparable. I call the absolute Brahman Sakti or Kali. Now these sayings of Sri Ramakrishna are sufficient to prove that the Divine Energy or *maya* is inseparable from the universal Being, the absolute Brahman, and it has been explained before why Sri Ramakrishna recognized the Brahman and Sakti as inseparable. Not only that, but Sri Ramakrishna believed that Brahman with form (*sakara*) and Brahman without form (*nirakara*) are one and the same substance. To quote in this connection the sayings of Ramakrishna, it can be said that one Master (Sri M) heard that to know God is knowledge (*jnana*), and non-knowledge of God is ignorance (*ajnana*). Again when Master Mahasaya told that he liked God much without form, Sri Ramakrishna said

‘निराकारे बिश्वास—तातो भाल्ह । तवे ऐ बुद्धि करो ना ये, एइटि केबल सत्य, धार सब मिथ्या । एइटि जेनो ये, निराकारओ सत्य, आचार साकारओ सत्य । तोमार येटि बिश्वास—सेटि धरे थाकूबे ।’

That is, Yes, it is good that you have a belief in formless aspect of the Absolute, but do not hold that this aspect is only real and others are unreal. You must know that as God without form is real, so real is God with form. In which you have much faith and regard, hold that, but yet at the same time do not disregard and deny God with form." M (Master Mahasaya) was astonished to hear that both the aspects of God are real.<sup>13</sup>

Swami Abhedananda said that the categories of time, space, and causation give rise to the idea of unreality, and that idea means the idea of duality or separateness. Vedanta said that when we separate ourselves from the underlying unity of the absolute Brahman, we fall short and get into the pit of delusion, and this delusive *maya* is no other than the categories of time, space, and causation. Most of the philosophers of the West have divided time and space into different aspects, and they are (1) *conceptual* space or time, (2) *perceptual* space or time, (3) *physical* space or time, and (4) *absolute* space or time. Some of the philosophers have divided space into five and time into three classes. The five manifestations of space are, *sensational*, *perceptual*, *conceptual*, *abstract*, and *mathematical*. Space is also conceived as a category of physical science. Three manifestations of time are, *perceptual*, *mathematical*, and *time as a category*. Kant called these two categories space and time as 'the forms of thought or intuition'. In his *Critique of Pure Reason*, while discussing about transcendental aesthetic, Kant called space and time as two forms of sensuous intuition (*anschanug*). He said "Space is nothing but the form of all phenomena of the external senses", and 'it is the subjective condition of our sensibility, without which no external intuition is possible for us'. In fact, whatever is seen in space, is a *representation* of our senses and is not a thing-in-itself. Similarly, time is not an idea or concept obtained or deduced by abstraction from experience. "Time, therefore, has subjective reality with regard to internal experience, that is, I really have the representation of time and of my determinations in it. Time,

<sup>13</sup> Vide *Kathamrita*, Vol I (1366), p. 25



therefore, is to be considered as real,, not so far as it is an object, but so far as it is the representation of myself as an object'.<sup>14</sup> Kant said that to get the ideas of all the external objects, we shall have to think them through space and time which are no other than the forms of intuition. All the special and temporal forms of objects are forms of our sense knowledge, so the objects have existence of their own outside of the mind. Kant said that one thought following another, gives us a conception of intervals which we call 'time' and when two ideas rise simultaneously, that which separates them, is what we call 'space'. The word 'time', according to Bergson, involves two different conceptions, and they are (i) *mathematical* or *scientific*, and (ii) *intuitive* or *instinctive*. The former is not real, whereas the latter is real, as it gives us the consciousness of *élan vital*. 'Space is regarded as a limiting concept. It is external, i.e., alien in essence, in relation to perceiving mind. Space is also the locus of mathematical or scientific causality, and is the field of intellect, not that of intuition'.<sup>15</sup>

Swami Abhedananda explained space and time as mental concepts, or as merely the conditions of thought, which are subject to change. While defining time and space, the Swami forwarded the question as to what are time and space? He said that 'time' means the *succession* which is a condition of thought, and 'space' means *co-existence*. He said "So the activities of the mind, being either in succession or simultaneous, produce the ideas of time and space".<sup>16</sup>

The Buddhist and Jain philosophers also conceived about space and time. The physicists have conceived about space and time almost in the similar way. Most of the physicists, such as, Profs. Eddington, Jeans, Whitehead, Sullivan, Crowther, and others are of the opinion that we cannot have

<sup>14</sup> Cf. *Critique of Pure Reason* (translated by Max Muller), pp. 18, 29.

<sup>15</sup> Henri Bergson differentiated intuition from intellect by saying that intellect or intellectual knowledge is external, relative, static and abstract, whereas intuition or intuitive knowledge is internal, absolute, dynamic, concrete and organic. Further, intellect analyzes and intuition synthesizes. Bergson also said that intuition is the precise counterpart of intellect—Vide *Creative Evolution*, p. 186.

<sup>16</sup> Vide *Doctrines of Karma* (1963), pp. 53-54.

space and time without things, and things without space and time, and specially space plays the dynamic role in the creative process and phenomenal events. In fact, space and time are essential for the existence of matter or phenomenal objects. Prof. Einstein said that the geometrical space is shaped and determined by "the sum total of its material context"<sup>17</sup> Prof. Barnett was of the opinion that the sum total of the masses of matter or things in the space-time cause the space-time 'to bend back on itself in a great closed cosmic curve'<sup>18</sup> Some of the philosophers and scientists admitted space and time unlimited and eternal, though Sankara and Kant refuted this idea. Some of the scientists explained space as unbound and limited, and Prof. Einstein said that the idea of space as unbound and limited is quite conceivable if we think of space as spherical. According to Einstein's general Theory of Relativity, space should no longer be conceived as a flat surface, as space-time is, in truth, circular or curved. Prof. Eddington subscribed his view in his *New Pathways in Science*<sup>19</sup> "One interesting thing Einstein has told us about the universe of space-time that it is not infinite stretching endlessly, but is quite definitely limited"<sup>20</sup> This radical theory of Einstein regarding the concept of space as unbound and limited is somewhat akin to the theory of Advaita Vedanta. Advaita Vedanta also admitted that space is relatively infinite, but it is, in reality, finite when the transcendental knowledge of the Brahman dawns upon man. To Prof. Einstein, space has reality only as an order of the objects residing in it, and the existence of time is similarly dependent on the order of events by which we apprehend and measure it. In fact, the Relativity Theory of Prof. Einstein proved that all physical motions should be thought of as a "continuous curve in four dimensional space-time continuous and all the phenomenal events therefore happen in space-time, welded together into a continuum"<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Puragra Paramapanthi *Advaita Vedanta and Modern Science*, p. 20

<sup>18</sup> Vide *The Universe and Dr. Einstein*, p. 103

<sup>19</sup> Vide Eddington's *New Pathways in Science*, p. 217

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Puragra Paramapanthi *Advaita Vedanta and Modern Science*

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 54

Now, it may be asked if, in reality, space and time have no permanent existence (*niitya-sattā*) of their own, then why they are conceived as space and time at all? To this Swami Abhedananda said that, as long as we admit the existence of the world of phenomena in which we live, so long we are bound by the inevitable law of cause and sequence and so long we will have to accept time and space. When a man thinks or considers himself as different from the Brahman or *Atman*, he is subject to the categories of time, space and causation, because, the Swami said that the very idea of separation gives rise to the concept of unreality. In reality, we are no other than the absolute Brahman, but this separation is inevitable in time of manifestation, as manifestation or projection (*abhivyakti* or *sristi*) connotes the idea of separation from the Reality. And this separation is necessary for recognizing the inseparability of the individual self (*jiva*), and the absolute Reality (Brahman). In the *Upanishad*, there lies the seed of separation-cum-projection, where it is said

एकोऽहं बहु स्याम प्रजायेय । 'तत् सृष्ट्वा यदेवानुप्राविशत्' ।

i.e., 'I am one and without any second, but for the phenomenal appearance I shall be many, and this projection of the phenomenal appearance happens from within. He enters into it, and is one with it, and is manifested as the innumerable forms.' Now this idea of becoming is the cause of manifold manifestation and also of separation. So Swami Abhedananda said that although the absolute Brahman is formless, yet it assumes various forms and maintains itself as God or *Huanyagarbha*, the first-born Lord of the universe. The spiritual form of the Divinity rises in the ocean of the formless Brahman, or of the absolute Godhead, floats there for some time and after satisfying the desires of the true Bhakta or worshipper, merges into the ocean, again.<sup>22</sup> In fact "the personal God with a spiritual form is the objectification or projection or manifestation of the impersonal ocean of Divinity."<sup>23</sup> Then the Swami quoted the *Upanishad* which said "Thou art one, yet thou takest many forms through Thy

<sup>22</sup> Vide *Divine Heritage of Man*, p. 74

unspeakable power of *maya* I bow down and salute Thee Whosoever know Thee as formless and with form, knows the eternal Truth<sup>23</sup>

Vedanta said that wherever we admit the existence of the phenomenal world, we admit also the categories of time, space and causation, which are no other than *maya*. Then the causeless and groundless absolute Brahman is *imagined* as the cause (*karana*) and ground or substratum (*adhisthāna*) of the changing phenomenal world. Swami Abhedananda said "*Isvara*, according to Advaita Vedanta, is both the material and the efficient cause of the universe"<sup>24</sup>. Further he said "He (God) is not the efficient cause alone, as the dualists maintain, but he is both efficient and material cause of the universe"<sup>25</sup>. The Swami was of the opinion that the absolute indeterminate (*nirguna*) Brahman assumes both the material and efficient cause (*upadana* and *nimitta karana*) for the fulfilment of His divine mission and also for His sportive play (*līlā*).

Regarding the manifestation of world appearance, the *Upanishad* said that everything existed in the womb of the *Prakṛiti* or causal nescience in the form of ideas or *samāskaras*, and the Brahman (determinate Brahman) creates means it (desires to) projects those causal *samāskaras* in gross form. Śrī Rāmakṛishṇa gave an example of this process of projection in a very lucid way. He said that the house wife (*bānī* *gunī*) preserves all kinds of seeds in a jar (*nyūtakātār*, *Ilāndī*) and when suitable time comes, she sows them in the ground (universe), and different kinds of living and non-living being come out from those seeds. The seeds are the symbol of the sleeping or unmanifested *samāskaras* of all kinds of animate and inanimate object, and by the effortless will of the Lord (*Isvara*), they are manifested. Then the unmanifested (*avyakta*) became manifested (*vyakta*) and this manifestation is known as projection or *sṛisṭi*. Swami Abhedananda described this process in this way (1) "That one has appeared as manifold through the manifestation of various powers that

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, p. 75

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, p. 134

exist potentially in the source of all things and all beings", (2) "Sometimes this power (or Energy) remains latent as undifferentiated cosmic energy and sometimes it manifests itself as various forces of the Nature", (3) "So the water of the ocean of that absolute Reality possesses in a potential state all the material, mental and spiritual forms that ever existed or will exist in future". Really the potential seeds of projection (*srusti*) manifest in gross form, and this process has been described by the Vedas, the *Upanishads*, and the *Puranas* that God, the Creator (Hiranyagarbha-Brahman) creates the universe and its creatures from within.

This theory of evolution was forwarded for the first time by Kapila in his Sankhya philosophy in a very scientific and systematic way, though the nucleus of this idea of evolution is found in the *Upanishads* like *Taittiriya* and others. Advaita Vedanta incorporated the idea of evolution from the Sankhya philosophy. The Tantra philosophy also adopted this idea with some changes or modifications. The Sankhya said that *Prakriti* in itself is unintelligent and inactive, and she manifests the universe and its beings when she comes in contact with the intelligent and all-shining *Purusha*. Advaita Vedanta took up this idea of the Sankhya but said that the *Prakriti* is the intelligent primordial Energy which is inscrutable in its nature, and is unspeakable (*anirvachaniya*). The *Purusha*<sup>25</sup> is the absolute Brahman which transcends the categories of time, space and causation. The causal Energy of the Sankhya became the mysterious medium of projection (*srusti*) in the Vedanta. This unspeakable and indescribable *Prakriti* is known in Advaita Vedanta as the causal nescience or *mayu* or *Avyakta* or *Avyākṛita* which is different from *Prakriti* of the Sankhya. It is described as existent (*bhāvarupa*) and endless and eternal (*anādi* and *ananta*) so long as it is not negated or sublated by the Brahman-knowledge. Vedanta said that

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<sup>25</sup> It should be remembered that *Purusha* of the Sankhya is different from the *Purusha* of the *Upanishad* and *Vedanta*, because the Sankhya admitted innumerable *Purushas*, whereas *Upanishad* and *Vedanta* admitted only one unique *Purusha* who is known as the *Atman* or Brahman.

when the divine light of the transcendental Brahman dawns upon a man, the causal nescience or *maya* is removed and the Brahman shines as one without the second So, while explaining this process of simultaneous disappearance of nescience and appearance of the Brahman-knowledge, Swami Abhedananda described that darkness which existed so long throughout eternity is instantly replaced by the self effulgent light of the absolute Brahman, as the deep darkness of a room is instantly enlightened when a match-stick is stricken

Tantra also incorporated from the Sankhya the idea of the prime-principles, *Purusha* and *Prakriti* in a modified form. Tantra explained *Purusha* as Siva and *Prakriti* as *Sakti*. Siva, in Tantra, is described as the all-intelligent pure consciousness, or the divine energy without action, and *Sakti*, as the divine force in action So, according to Tantra, the inexplicable and unreal *maya* of Advaita Vedanta is known as the real and eternally existent Mahamaya, *Sakti* or *Kali* in Tantra The magical play (manifestation) of the universe which bears an apparent (*pratitika*) or relative (*apekshika*) existence (*sattā*) in Advaita Vedanta, appears as a real and eternal existence (*nitya* and *ananta sattā*) in the Tantra philosophy Tantra described Mahamaya or *Sakti* as real (*nitya*) and absolute existence (*paramathika-sattā*) Because, according to Tantra, the manifestation of the universe is the real and dynamic play of eternal *Sakti*, or the world manifestation itself is no other than *Sakti* Siva is the changeless *Purusha*, and *Sakti* is the real emanation of the *Purusha*, and that means Siva manifesting Himself as *Sakti* takes the role of the world-play, and Tantra said, that after the divine play is over, the two bifurcated Realities, Siva and *Sakti*, are polarised into pure consciousness and shine as undivided one Reality, as the positive and the negative parts of a pea appear as one covered by a sheath, and that undivided Siva *Sakti* principle shines with its undying glory throughout eternity The Rig Veda described it as *Ardhanārishvara*

Now we find that where Tantra and Vedanta end, the philosophy of Ramakrishna begins Because, in Tantra philosophy, we find that the Brahman as Siva or Paramasiva shines as both indeterminate (*nirguna*) and determinate (*saguna*)—transcendent (*vishvottama*) and immanent (*visva-*

*gata*), i.e., as both static and dynamic Principle, and in the non dualistic Vedanta too, the Brahman is both indeterminate and determinate—transcendent and immanent One, the difference between Tantra and Advaita Vedanta lies in the fact that while Siva, the absolute Brahman of Tantra, shines as transcendent, He becomes one with Sakti, and His divine counterpart (Sakti) remains as non-different from Siva, and both Siva and Sakti shine as one with the second, whereas the absolute Brahman of Advaita Vedanta shines as an eternal existence that transcends not only the limitations of time space and causation, but also the categories of one and many, and in this sense, the absolute Brahman of Advaita Vedanta is different from the absolute Brahman of the Tantra philosophy. Now, the idea of Sri Ramakrishna's absolute Brahman has incorporated the ideas of both Tantra and Vedanta, and at the same time it has surpassed or transcended them in its lofty and all-inclusive universal idea. While unifying the ideas of both Vedanta and Tantra, Sri Ramakrishna said "The Vedantavadi Brahmovijnanis say that *sristi*, *sthiti*, *pralaya*, *jiva*, and *jagat*—all are the play of Sakti or Divine Energy. In the process of discrimination or *neti neti vichāra*, these appear as dream and Brahman is realized as only real and all other things (other than Brahman) appear as unreal. Then Sakti is also felt as an unreal dream in Advaita Vedanta. But in spite of discriminating thousand times, you will not be able to go beyond the limit of Sakti, until and unless you go deep into *samadhi*. 'I am meditating', 'I am thinking' are the manifestations of Sakti. So I say that Brahman and Sakti are inseparable, because if we admit one, we are bound to admit the other. As for example, fire and its burning power. If we admit fire, we are bound to admit its burning power. As fire cannot be conceived apart from its burning power, so the burning power cannot be thought without its source, the fire. The sun cannot be thought without its rays, and so also the rays cannot be conceived without the sun. \* \* Similarly, milk cannot be conceived without its colour of whiteness. So the Brahman cannot be meditated upon without its (inseparable) Sakti or Energy, and similarly Sakti cannot be conceived without the Saktiman Brahman. The absolute (*nitya*) without

its relative phenomenal aspect (*līla*) cannot be imagined”<sup>26</sup> Further, Sri Ramakrishna added “Kālī is the Brahman (Kālī-Brahman) She is both indeterminate and determinate (*nirguna* and *saguna*) Is Kālī black? No, She seems to be black from distance, but when you go near to Her and really realize Her, She does not appear as black” The word ‘distance’ connotes the idea of ignorance or nescience (*ajñāna*), and so Sri Ramakrishna said ‘जानते पारले कालो नय’ i.e. when right knowledge comes, one realizes Kālī and Brahman as non-different Therefore the same absolute Brahman (or *Paramatman*) assumes the forms of both Kālī and Brahman, or as both the determinate principle and the indeterminate principle So, according to Sri Ramakrishna, right knowledge about Kālī or Brahman is necessary, and that right or correct knowledge, (*yathārthajñāna*) is revealed when cover of nescience (*ajñāna-avarana*) is removed, such as the self-shining sun is revealed in the sky when the cloud that covers the sun, is removed Sri Ramakrishna said to discover the non-relational pure knowledge that already exists all the time in the core of all beings Sri Ramakrishna advised to remove the sense of difference (*bheda-buddhi*) which is no other than ignorance (*ajñāna*) about the real essence of both the Divine Energy (*Sakti*) and the Brahman He repeatedly said that the same formless absolute (*nirākāra*) Brahman, which is beyond speech and mind assumes the form (*ākāra*) of Divine *Sakti* which means the sportive play of the world-appearance Now, when this right knowledge comes, the same absolute Brahman is known as *Līlamayee* with Her effortless playful aspect Sri Ramakrishna said in the *Kathamṛta* (Vol I)

‘तिनि लीलमयी, ए संसार तार लील। तिनि इच्छामयी—आनन्दमयी।  
स्वयेर एकजनके मुक्ति देन तिनि।’

Sadhaka Ramaprasad also said

‘स्वयेर धुइ दुटो एकटा काटे, हेसे दाओ मा हात चापाइ’।

That is, the dynamic aspect of the (static) absolute Brahman is known as *Līlamayee*, and this universe is Her sportive play

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<sup>26</sup> Vide *Kathamṛta*, Vol I, 14th edition, pp 50-51



(lila) She is the embodiment of the divine will-to-manifest, and she is full of bliss and intelligence. She makes free from the chain of delusion or *samsāra* only one among millions of people, who struggle for freedom, as among thousands of flying kites, one or two are only cancelled. Swami Abhedananda was absolutely in tune with this universal doctrine of Śrī Ramakrishna, although he at first preached the doctrine of Vedānta in the West to prepare the ground of preaching the gospel of their wonderful Master, Śrī Ramakrishna.

Now, let us quote a portion of a letter of Swami Abhedananda which was written to one of his disciples, Principal Sisir Kumar Acharya. The disciple wanted to know philosophy of Śrī Ramakrishna, and Swami Abhedananda wrote him thus: "Yes, you have asked me who is Śrī Saradadevi. \* \* Ramaprasad sang

के जानेरे काली केमन ।

षड्दर्शने ना पाय दरशन ।

That is, 'who knows how the goddess Kali is. The six systems of philosophy cannot determine Her', etc. Further, Ramaprasad sang,

साकार-साधके तुमि मा साकारा,  
निराकार-उपासके निराकारा,  
केह केह कय ब्रह्म ज्योतिर्मय,  
सेओ तुमि तारा त्रिकालवर्तिनी ॥  
ये-अबधि यार अभिसन्धि हय,  
से-अबधि से परब्रह्म कय,  
तत्पररे तुरीय अनिर्वचणीय  
सेओ तुमि तारा त्रिलोकव्यापिणी ।

That is, the Divine Mother appears with form to the Sadhaka who like the form of the deity. Again who likes to worship the deity as formless, Mother appears to him as formless. Some one says that the Brahman is full of light, but the Mother, who exists in past, present, and future, is also that Brahman. In fact, as far as a man realizes the deity, so far he speaks about the Brahman, but beyond the limit of *ajñāna* there exists the unspeakable transcending Fourth, and you, Tara, who covers the three regions like the heaven (*svarga*), the world

(*marta*), and the under-world (*patala*), are that transcendental state'

"Now, when you will know this secret or truth, you will realize Śrī Saradadevī. You will not be able to know Her only by reason or intellect. As the fire and its burning power are inseparable, so the Brahman and *māyā* and also Śrī Rāmakrishna and Śrī Saradadevī are inseparable." *Māyā*, the Divine Energy of that Parameshvara, manifests in us as *vidyā* and *avidyā*, i.e., as purified calm mind and unpurified disturbed mind. *Avidyā* has two powers, *avarana-sakti* (covering power) and *vikshepa-sakti* (manifesting power).

त्वमेको प्रकृति ब्रह्म-आच्छादिनी,

महामाया-रूपे त्रिजगत्-मन-मोहिनी ।

That is, 'when you manifest as the *Prakṛiti*, you cover the Brahman, and as *Mahāmāyā*, you enchant the minds of the three worlds', etc.

"So, without the grace of Saradadevī, attachment to the world (*samsāra*) is not removed, discrimination and detachment do not come, and the eyes of knowledge are not opened. So you must pray to Her and must dedicate yourself to Her. If She is pleased, She will take you to Śrī Thakur (Rāmakrishna). So you must pray to Her for Her grace.

"Further, you have written that the philosophy of 'R' (Rabindranath) has been written, but the philosophy of Rāmakrishna has not yet been written. To this I would like to add that I have not read the philosophy of 'R'. \* \* But, in comparison to it, the philosophy of Rāmakrishna will be like a fathomless ocean of eternal Divine sentiment (*'ananta-bhāva-samudra'*). Vivekananda said that if you try to define and describe the philosophical ideas of Śrī Rāmakrishna, you will minimise or belittle Him, because He was so great, etc. I am sending you this letter what has also been written by Śrī Aurobinda after marking and after going through it, you will return it to me \* \*

\* The Readers are requested to read the "Preface" of the book, *Viśvarūpīnī Mā Sārādā*, written by Swamī Prajñānānanda. The book *Viśvarūpīnī Mā Sārādā* is written by Śrīmatī Suktā Ghose, and published by the Rāmakrishna Vedānta Math, Calcutta.

"If you wish to understand Thakur (Sri Ramakrishna), you will have to acquire knowledge about all the *shastras* like Veda, Upanishad, Purana, Tantra, as well as all Eastern and Western philosophies. Though I have knowledge of those *shastras*, yet I do not dare to write philosophy of Sri Ramakrishna, and so I have said in his *stotra*

तत्त्वं देव न जानामि रामकृष्ण तव प्रभो ।

यादृशोऽसि कृपासिन्धो तादृशाय नमो नम ॥

'Oh Sri Ramakrishna! I do not know the real essence (*tattva*) of you, and so I bow down to you as you are in yourself the ocean of Grace (*kripasindhu*)'

"I am very glad to learn that you wish to read philosophies. Read them with great care, but I think that your head will be puzzled if you read all Eastern and Western philosophies. But how will you be able to determine what are correct among different schools or doctrines and what are not. At first that doubt crept in me when I used to read different schools of philosophy, and I was gradually turned into an agnostic. Then I stopped the reading of all philosophies, and began to search the standard of truth through meditation. Afterwards I got the standard by the grace of Sri Thakur (Ramakrishna), and found out the means to esteem and regard each philosophy in its own place, and then I was free from all doubts and disbeliefs. The *Upanishad* says

मिथ्यते हृदयग्रन्थिशिङ्खलन्ते सर्वसंशया ।

क्षीयन्ते चाप्य कर्माणि तस्मिन् दृष्टे परावरे ॥

That is, 'when the ultimate goal (of the human beings) is reached, all knots of mind are cut asunder and all doubts are removed, and all actions die away, i.e., all actions are then performed in the spirit of worship of God'

From this letter of Swami Abhedananda, we find that mere intellect or reason is not a means to an end. If we wish to understand philosophy as well as greatness of both Sri Sarada-devi and Sri Ramakrishna, we will have to acquire sufficient knowledge of all scriptures and will have to possess the standard of truth so as to determine the real value of them.

It is true that all men and supermen have some distinctive thoughts and ideas which really built the structures of philosophies of their own. So to know and to represent their philosophies, we must be in tune with their thoughts and ideas, and should carefully determine their characteristic features and tendencies to find out the ultimate truth as goal. Swami Abhedananda did not discourage anyone to get into the tenets and tendencies of all individual thoughts and ideas and also to represent them into a definite system of philosophy, but encouraged the seekers after truth to get into the systems of thoughts of all kinds of philosophers and also to represent them by acquiring the standard (*māpkāthi*) of truth through the process of divine realization or *brahmanubhūti*. What we need, is the correct rendering of thoughts, presented by different schools. So care should be taken for appreciating the essence of their thoughts and ideas.

To sum up the philosophical ideas of Swami Abhedananda it can be said that the Swami maintained out and out the transcendental viewpoint of non-dualism like his Master, Sri Ramakrishna, though that transcendental viewpoint of non-dualism (Advaita) is somewhat different from those of Sankara and other philosophers. This viewpoint is rather unique and novel in this sense that both the Acharyas, Sankara and Abhedananda maintained the doctrine of Advaita Vedanta, but difference between them lies in the fact that Sankara maintained the non-dualistic Reality which transcends the categories of time, space, and causality, and negated the so-called permanent reality (*pāramarthika-sattā*) of the play of the world-appearance after the realization of the Brahman, whereas Swami Abhedananda maintained the same doctrine like his Master, Sri Ramakrishna, which discloses the fact that the world-appearance (*jagat*) and the worldly being (*jīva-jagat*) are the divine manifestation of Divine *Prakṛiti* or Sakti, which is non-different from the Brahman in essence. In his *Hindu Philosophy of India* Swami Abhedananda said "He who travels through this path of wisdom (*jñāna*), burns the vast forest of the trees of phenomenal names and forms (*nāma-rūpa*), by starting in it the fire of right knowledge. Because all these names and forms are produced by *māya*, the inscrutable power of the Brahman. It is inseparable from Brahman, as the power

of burning is inseparable from fire.<sup>28</sup> At the outset it appears that Swami Abhedananda's conclusion regarding *maya* as the inscrutable power of the Brahman echoes the conclusion of the Tantra philosophy, because Tantra says that Sakti is inseparable from Siva, the supreme consciousness, as Sakti or Kali is the counterpart of Sadasiva or Mahākāla. But in a similar way Sri Ramakrishna also said that Sakti and the possessor of Divine Power (Saktunan) is one and the same. Sri Ramakrishna forwarded an example of the moving snake and the motionless snake, which are, in reality, one and the same snake. Similarly Sri Ramakrishna gave an example of the salt-doll which lost its existence in the ocean, when it went to measure the depth of the ocean. Here the salt-doll is nescience or *maya* and the ocean is the Brahman, and Sri Ramakrishna said that when *maya* approaches the all-consciousness Brahman and tries to determine the nature of the Brahman, it entirely loses its existence into the fathomless ocean of the Brahman, and there remains only the Brahman as one without the second. Swami Abhedananda said that a Jnana Yogi, in his search after the absolute Truth, rejects all names and forms by discriminating 'not this, not this' (*neti, neti*), until he realizes the one nameless, formless, and absolute Being of the universe, where the subject and the object—knower, knowledge and the known object are transcended." According to Sankara, the *shuddha* or indeterminate Brahman has no connection with the phenomenal play of the universe and its beings, but, according to Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda and Swami Abhedananda, though the *shuddha* or indeterminate Brahman is above all the phenomenal appearances, yet it *assumes* the apparent realities of the universe and its beings for the purpose for its sportive play

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<sup>28</sup> Vide *Complete Works of Swami Abhedananda*, Vol II, p 297, and also Vol X, p 312

<sup>29</sup> The word *maya* here signifies intellect or *buddhi* which approaches to determine the nature of the Brahman. The fact is this that intellect or *buddhi* is the only medium or instrument by which (*neti, neti, vichara*) shining light of the all-consciousness Brahman is determined or realized. Now when the Brahman-consciousness is reflected in the intellect or *buddhi*, *ajnana* in the *buddhi* (*buddhi* being the product of *ajnana* or nescience) dies out and there shines the pure consciousness, and then the realization of the Brahman-consciousness is possible.

Swami Vivekananda said "There is but one *Atman*, there cannot be two. We have seen how in the whole of this universe there is but one Existence, and that one Existence, when seen through the senses, is called the world of matter. When it is seen through the mind, it is called the world of thoughts and ideas. And when it is seen as it is, then it is the one infinite being. So, it is not that there are three things in one—the body, and the mind, and the Self, although that was a convenient way of putting it in the course of explanation, but all is that *Atman*, and that one Being is sometimes called the body, sometimes the mind, and sometimes the Self, according to different visions. There is but one Being, which the ignorant call the world"<sup>30</sup> This statement of Swami Vivekananda echoes the precepts of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, and is similar to that of Swami Abhedananda. In the sayings of Sri Ramakrishna, as recorded in the *Sri Ramakrishna-Mahimā* (second edition, 1968), by Akshay Kumar Sen, the celebrated author of the *Ramakrishna-Punthi*, we find "The limitless, all-present and all-pervading Brahman may be known by any name or designation, but, in reality, it is one without the second. Its states are imagined as two: one, *niitya* or transcendence, and other, *līla* or immanate. When the Brahman shines as transcended and as one without the second, it seems to be mysterious and indefinable (*kimbhutakimākāra*) and that transcending state is only known by it \* \*, but while it remains in the immanent state, it appears as manifold beings and this state can be known in different ways. The *Purusha* is invariably the *Prakriti*. Though one *appears* as two (in different forms), yet both (the forms) are non-different. That is, two seeming prime Principles constitute the one undivided Principle (the basic one). For the cause of sportive play (*līla*) or projection (*srīsti*), the one undivided (*akhanda*) Brahman appears as two principles. As for example, one pea being watered, is divided into two halves and turned into a fruit or seed and from that seed, sprout springs up. Similarly, one and secondless Brahman is regarded as cause (*karana*) of projection or creation (*srīsti*) when transformed into *Purusha* and *Prakriti*.

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<sup>30</sup> Vide John Yale, *What Religion is in the Words of Swami Vivekananda*, London 1962.

"The *Paramatman* or Brahman shines in its transcendental nature as one without the second, but in the immanent nature, or in the state of sportive play, it requires the help of Sakti or Energy. As an earthen image is not made from dry mire, but it requires some water for that purpose, so, in case of *lila* or sportive play, the unique transcendent Brahman seems to be powerless, so it requires the power of Sakti. Therefore, the one matchless Brahman appears as *Purushu* in one sense and as *Prakriti* in other sense in the time of projection (*sristi*). The Reality (*niitya*) remains the same as non-different, but in the time of *ila* or manifestation, it appears as dual or different for changing of circumstances." This saying itself sings the song of non-dualistic philosophy of Sri Ramakrishna and that of Swami Abhedananda.

## AN INTRODUCTION

Swami Abhedananda, the direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, left behind him precious treasures of various valuable thoughts and ideas on religion and philosophy, along with those of education, culture, art, science, astronomy, history and literature. He served his Master Sri Ramakrishna during his last days, spent his sweet and memorial days with the Master at Dakshineswar, Cossipore Garden, and Shyampukur house, reached the supreme goal, the realization of the Brahman, which is both immanent and transcendent, took the name of 'Kali-tapsvi' or 'Kali-Vedanti' for the strict observance of austerity and penance at the Baranagar Math, and received the divine blessings of the Holy Mother, Sri Sarada Devi, for his literary genius and contribution. After his *parivrajaka* life, he went to London and from there to America at the call of his beloved spiritual brother and guide, Swami Vivekananda. He spent more than twenty five years in America and delivered lectures on religion, philosophy, and many other subjects, which have been published in the 'Complete Works of Swami Abhedananda' in ten volumes. This compendium volume, *'The Philosophical Ideas of Swami Abhedananda—A Critical Study'* is offered to the reading public as a guide to the lectures or discussions that have been published in the ten volumes of 'Complete Works of Swami Abhedananda'. The chapters have been arranged according to the serial order as maintained in the 'Complete Works'.



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With our ears what is auspicious  
may we hear, O ye powers!  
With our eyes what is auspicious  
may we see O ye who are worthy of  
worship May we enjoy the length  
of days the powers allow with us  
(these our) lodges chanting our praise  
with steady limbs! Welfare to us  
may far famed Indra grant; may  
he the nourisher who knoweth all  
grant welfare unto us! To us may  
he whose wheel is never stayed, grant  
welfare, may he who telleth speech  
grant welfare unto us.

## CHAPTER III

### SPIRITUAL UNFOLDMENT

*Spiritual Unfoldment* by Swami Abhedananda, is a guide book for those who are willing to learn methodically and earnestly the practices of Yoga and spiritual *sadhana*, for attaining self-control and complete mastery over their senses, body, and mind. The author, being a man of Realization and highly gifted teacher of humanity, knows best the method of achieving the highest goal of human life. He knows well the difficulties and pitfalls in the path of spiritual progress, while proceeding through the Yogic practices and Vedantic *sadhana*. He puts forward different knotty problems of the Yoga method, solves them with a master hand by clearing all doubts and leads the spiritual seekers of Truth, step by step to the highest destination of the transcendental knowledge. He discloses the secret of concentration, and assures us that it is the best spiritual method of attaining the supramental truth and absolute freedom. He warns us against the danger that we are generally liable to fall into pit being deluded by the charms of the psychic powers, and urges us to be fully cautious of them by keeping our mind fixed upon the highest ideal. He says that we should learn to keep ourselves away from the snares of worldly pleasures by right discrimination (*viveka* or *sadasadvichara*) and by concentrating our mind (*dhyana*) upon the *summum bonum* of life.

Swami Abhedananda classifies his discourses into three illuminating chapters, *self control, concentration and meditation*, and *Godconsciousness*. Self-control is the key to unlock the mysteries of concentration and meditation. Concentrated attention leads the Sadhakas directly to the temple of Godconsciousness. The Swami says that the spiritual life of a man or a woman depends upon the subjugation (*damana*) or suppression (*nirodha*) of the senses, upon the self control (*samjaman*) of the passions and desires, and upon the maintenance of Divine powers that are latent in the reservoir of the subconscious or unconscious plane in every individual soul. Concentration

leads to meditation means concentration prepares the mind of the seekers of truth to reach the state of concentrated attention or meditation after reducing its distracted and divergent modifications (*manovrittis*) to an unbroken flow of one current of thought (*niravachhinna-ekamukhi-chintādhārā*) towards a fixed ideal. By gaining the power of meditation, a Yogi enters into the state of Godconsciousness, which is called in the treatise on Yoga *samādhi*. In fact, Godconsciousness is not a state at all, although it is commonly known as the fourth state or *turiya*, as it transcends all other states, first, second and third (*Virat*, *Hiranyagarbha* and *Isvara chaitanyas*) in its surpassing nature and essence. The states are nothing but the different levels of consciousness, and the fourth or transcending consciousness is the pure consciousness (*shuddha-chaitanya*) itself. Having attained to this pure consciousness or enlightenment, the soul enters into the abode of eternal peace and serene tranquillity.

Acharya Sankara and other non-dualist Vedantists criticize this state of emancipation or *mukti*, achieved through the process of Yoga, because they say that there is a great deal of difference between the Yogic intuition and the Vedantic intuition. They argue that mere subjugation or suppression of the rushes of passions and desires mean the reduction of the gross forms of passions and desires into their causal state. Desires are rather forced to sleep in the bed of the unconscious in causal form by suppression and are likely to wake up again under favourable conditions. So, by suppression one cannot get permanent peace, but it offers him only temporary calmness of the mind. The non-dualist Vedantists want passions and desires to be eternally sublimated into pure consciousness. Like the Vedantists, Sri Aurobinda also said that the *ripus* (passions and desires) cannot be conquered by *damana*. Only by purification, divine consciousness is achieved and the egoistic nature is changed, and this can be done.

Swami Abhedananda deals with the subject of spiritual unfoldment purely from the Yogic viewpoint, so it is neither necessary for him to compare his method of treatment with any other systems of philosophical thought, nor to refute the method of Yoga in the light of Advaita Vedanta. While he deals with the process of controlling of the mind in his

*Doctrine of Karma*, he says. Instead of indulging in desires, some say, you should kill them out. But you cannot kill them out. There are certain cults that teach 'Kill out all the desires and make your mind blank.' We cannot do that. We can only reduce the number of desires by discrimination and not allowing indulgence. In that, we can purify our heart or mind. This purification of mind is no other than the sublimation or transformation (*rupāntarakarana*) of the mind into pure consciousness. Sri Ramakrishna also instructs the spiritual aspirant to change or reverse the course of thought from one side to another (*'mora phiraye de*), and the change implies the notion of purification of the mind.

Sri Ramakrishna has said that all the systems of spiritual practice are true, as they lead us to one and the same goal in the final analysis. The paths of progress may differ, but the destination or goal is one and the same. The ultimate aim of all the systems of religion and spiritual practice is to be free from, or to remove the bondage of, ignorance and simultaneously to attain *mukti* or salvation. So Swami Abhedananda says that a real aspirant of spiritual knowledge may choose and if he is a sincere seeker after truth, he will surely reach the goal.

Swami Abhedananda's discourses are all through very lucid and clear, so that we may grasp and understand the secret of the subject easily and make them applicable in our daily life. His style and language are penetrating and transparent, and they show us the inner depth, true significance and real purport of the subject and thus help us in realizing the highest truth.

To throw light upon his discussions on the three important subjects he deals them very intelligently. In the chapter on 'Self-control', he says that religion is an essential thing for everyone, but before entering into its kingdom, one should know its real aspect or nature. Every religion (religion signifies here the religious faith of every nation or sect) can be divided into two parts, one of which is the non-essential and the other is the essential. Doctrines, dogmas, rituals, ceremonies, mythology, etc., are the raw materials of true religion, so they are the non-essential part. But they should not be neglected or thrown aside, as they are helpful and necessary at certain

stages of spiritual progress. The essential part of religion is possessed of two things which are Self-knowledge or *atmajñāna* or *aparokṣhānubhūti* and self control or controlling of mind, senses and nature. The Swami defines Self-knowledge as an immediate knowledge of the higher Self, the *Atman* or Brahman, and self-control, he says, is the restraint of the lower self or selfish nature. The knowledge of the higher Self comes when the lower self is subdued or transformed into pure consciousness.

Swami Abhedananda compares the non-essential of religion with a huge heap of husks, under which lies hidden the kernel of the essential. So for transformation of the lower self the practice of Yoga along with the faculty of discrimination (*viveka* or *vichara*) are necessary. The mind has tremendous power over the body and senses. The tendency of the mind is to seek objects which are more pleasing to senses, and to reject the unpleasant objects. Its natural tendency is to hover round the phenomenal sense objects, but when we discriminate with our pure heart the phenomenal things, we find that they are not permanent, and they give pleasures which are contingent and temporary. So we shall have to control the mind and should purify the mind to grasp the objects which are permanent and give us real and permanent pleasure. Vedānta says that knowledge of the *Atman* is only real, and it removes ignorance which misleads us in this world of *maya*. The Yogis say that desires are the cause of our bondage and ignorance, and if we trace the cause of desires, we find that desires are the outcome of the dormant impressions of our mind, or they are the awakened state of the sleeping impressions that lie buried in the subconscious bed of our mind. There are accumulated impressions of the past incarnations, and we also collect impressions in the present incarnation, and none of them are lost. The Yogis say that the impressions which are awakened through will power, are the cause of desires, and those desires control all the living beings. The desires really constitute the stuff of the mind. So mind must be controlled, so as to reduce it into its simplest form. It should be controlled through concentration and meditation, and when the mind is absolutely controlled and transformed, we attain the goal of all religions,

which is the knowledge of the divine Self

The second chapter deals with Concentration and Meditation. Swami Abhedananda says that each individual soul possesses the power of concentration in a greater or lesser degree. Concentration in its simplest form is known to us by the name of *attention*. This power of attention is a gift of Nature. It is a spontaneous outgrowth of the nature of our mind. When the diverging rays of the mental energy are entered into a focus and when the concentrated energy is forced through one channel, it strengthens the mind. The Swami has given here the example of inborn power of attention of the mind of different men, animals, and birds, and has said that spontaneous attention can be transformed by voluntary effort into the power of higher concentration upon the most abstract truths, and lastly upon the absolute Reality or the *Atman*.

The control of attention by will-power is called concentration or *dhāranā*. The result of concentration varies according to the nature of the objects towards which the concentrated mental energy is directed. 'The principal aids to concentration in the way of obtaining the best results from it are, *first*, right discrimination of the object of concentration, *secondly*, a clear and definite understanding of what one wishes to acquire, *thirdly*, self-confidence, and *lastly*, firm determination, settled purpose, and perseverance." The Hindu psychologists have divided mental activity into (a) *kshipta* or scattered, (b) *mudha* or stupid and confused, (c) *vikshipta* or sometimes active and sometimes inactive or dull, (d) *ekagra* or one-pointed, or concentrated, and (e) *niruddha* or perfect controlled or absolutely quietened. In the *niruddha* state of mind, the true nature of spirit is manifested or revealed.

The power of concentration can be acquired by mental process alone, or by physico-mental process, and concentration leads to meditation or *dhyana*. Meditation means the continuous or unbroken flow of one current of thought towards a fixed or chosen ideal. In this state of meditation, all the modifications (*vrutis*) of the mind are calmed, i.e., the mind is transformed into consciousness and is tuned with the pure and absolute consciousness of the *Atman*. So, keeping the highest ideal before your mind, march onward towards the path of

meditation, and you will enjoy the supreme happiness by entering into *samadhi*, or by realizing the *Atman* which is one without the second

The third chapter deals with Godconsciousness' or *aparokshanubhuti* of the *Brahman*. The highest consciousness makes an apparent man a Divine God-man. True religion begins in a man when this highest consciousness manifests in him. Our life consists in constant effort of the soul to subdue or overcome the limitations imposed by them. The forces of Nature are trying to drag the soul in one direction, while the inner forces impel the soul to resist and rise above them. This struggle is going on all the time in every individual soul, some may come to know it, and some remain blind to it. True civilization means the conquest of nature by the human soul. The whole history of humanity teaches this fact. The physical nature tells us to live like a savage or slave, whereas the spiritual nature teaches us to unfold the mystery of our true nature, which is unearthly and divine. The victory of man over physical nature is due to real knowledge of the *Atman*. Swami Abhedananda has explained here the planes of physical or material, moral, and spiritual, and said that when struggle for freedom begins, then we live in the moral plane, and, in this moral plane, man is partly animal and partly spiritual. As long as a man struggles with the animal nature, he is known as moral or ethical, but when he has conquered the animal nature completely, he becomes spiritual. From the spiritual plane, man realizes his real nature which is the *Atman*.

The Swami says that four things are absolutely necessary for the purification of the heart and purification of the heart means to conquer the animal nature and to quieten the modifications of the mind. The required four things are, "first, self-control, which includes the control of senses and the control of the mind by the practice of concentration, secondly, truthfulness, thirdly, disinterested love for all, fourthly, unselfish works." Spiritual unfoldment is brought about by the evolution of the inner nature of the apparent man. The Swami has illustrated here the story of the woodcutter, which was related by his beloved Master, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, and said in the conclusion, that men should be cautious about the temptations of the delusive world, if he really desires to attain to Godcon-

sciousness All the past Masters and Prophets attained the highest illumination The Swami has mentioned the names of the mystic philosophers like Plotinus, Flaccus, Echart, Porphyrius, Dionysius, and others, who attained ecstasy and silenced their mind, and enjoyed unearthly peace and tranquility He has also mentioned the names of Christ, Buddha, Krishna, Ramakrishna and other Saviours, who realized the highest Truth and preached the universal gospel of Truth to the world, and says that each soul will attain to the state of Godconsciousness, sooner or later, by the process of spiritual evolution <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> It is needless to mention in this connection that whenever anyone approach Swami Abhedananda to seek an advice, what particular book of the Swami he will read, first to get a comprehensive idea of his philosophy, the Swami used to suggest him to read first the book, *Spiritual Unfoldment*, the language of which is very lucid and simple, but thought is penetrating and deep



## CHAPTER IV

### SELF-KNOWLEDGE

Self-knowledge is a collection of six lectures, delivered by Swami Abhedananda in America. These lectures contain mainly the rich thoughts of the *Upanishads*. The Self has formed the central theme of the Swami's discussion, as the Self or *Atman* is the fountain-head of all things of the world and lies at the root of all knowledge whether of science, philosophy, and religion, and the attainment of the Self is the *summum bonum* of human life. The *Upanishads* teach that those who desire intellectual, moral and spiritual development, must learn to discriminate between spirit and matter, soul and body, reality and unreality, and must realize the Self which is immortal, eternal and divine. The Self is devoid of all kinds of changes and yet it is recognized as the ground (*adhisthana*) of all phenomenal changes.

Swami Abhedananda has discussed in the first chapter 'Spirit and Matter', and says that two words have various synonyms, such as ego and non ego, subject and object, mind and matter. In the theory of superimposition (*adyasa-bhasya*), Acharya Sankara has said "*Yushmadashmat-pratyaya - gocharayor - vishaya - vishayinostamah - prakasha-vad viruddha-svabhavayo \* \**", i.e., the material object or non-self and the shining self—matter and spirit—are contradictory with each other. Sankara says 'It being an established fact that the object and the subject (non-self or matter and self or consciousness), that are fit to be the contents of the concepts 'you' and 'we' (respectively), and are by nature as contradictory as light and darkness, cannot logically have any identity, it follows that their attributes can have it still less, as the attribute of matter is insentience and that of the Self is consciousness. These attributes cannot have any relation of identity or non-difference. But through ignorance we try to establish a mutual relation between the reality and the unreality—the unchangeable and the changeable.' The Swami says "Some say that spirit or mind or

ego is the cause of matter, while others reverse the relation and believe that matter is the cause of spirit or mind or ego. The conclusions have given foundation to the various explanations of the universe, which can be classified under three heads: the spiritualistic or idealistic, the materialistic, and monistic theories. Now, what are the viewpoints of these theories? The Swami writes:

- (a) The spiritualistic or idealistic theory claims that spirit or mind is the creator of matter and energy, hence the creator of all material objects, and it denies the existence of matter as distinct from the mode or condition of spirit or mind.
- (b) The materialistic theory maintains that matter produces spirit, mind, ego or subject.
- (c) The monistic theory maintains that one and secondless Self or *Atman* is the cause and foundation of every one of the phenomenal universe and everything that evolves from that prime-cause, goes back to that cause or source after playing the role of manifestation.

Now, in India, Greece, Germany and England, there have arisen a number of spiritualists or idealists like Bishop Berkeley, who denied the existence of the external world and told that matter is inseparable from the mental ideas. In India, the Yogachara Buddhists also said that the external objects of the universe are non-existent other than the mind or consciousness (*vijnana*). Sometimes Sankara, the greatest exponent of Advaita Vedanta, also said "*charācharam bhāti mano vilāsam*", i.e., the objective world-appearance is the representation of the mind (or *vijnana*). Majority of the scientists, physicists, chemists, medical practitioners and the evolutionists of the present time maintain the naive materialistic theory. In India, the Charvakas and many other sects were also the believers of the materialistic doctrine. The school of Advaita Vedanta uphold the monistic theory which explains everything through the viewpoint of the unparalleled *Atman* which is one without the second.

Swami Abhedananda first considers the materialistic theory which reduces everything of the world into matter

and claims that spirit is the product of matter. So first of all we shall have to know the meaning of 'matter'. If we ask anyone whether he has seen matter, he will answer in a negative way, and will say that when he looks at a flower, he sees first the colour of the flower and then gets the fragrance that exists in the flower. The psychologists say that colour is the result of the objective and subjective elements, and, therefore, colour is the product of combination of that which comes from the outside world and is given by the subjective mental activities. Thus we see and understand that colour does not rest in the flower, but it depends upon retinae, optic nerves and brain-cells as well and so it cannot be the same as matter.

Such conclusion can be drawn in the case of sound as matter. Swami Abhedananda says that John Stuart Mill defines matter as the 'permanent possibility of sensation' and the mind as the 'permanent possibility of feeling'. Therefore, that which permanently makes sensation or feeling, cannot be revealed by the senses, as the senses are merely the gross instruments or open doors through which sensation or feeling comes. Although we know that 'matter' is something that exists in space and time and causes sensation or feeling, yet we cannot see or touch matter, and, therefore, that which corresponds to the same 'matter', will always remain intangible. So, gold, stone, chair, table, etc are not, in reality, matter, but are only that which is produced by matter, and, therefore, the mystery of the term 'matter' remains as a curious thing to be known or solved forever and ever.

The word 'matter' is derived from Latin *materies* which means 'stuff' in the sense of solid wood of a tree or a timber for building, but it is not the real thing as 'matter'. In science and philosophy, matter has been used and explained as 'an unknown substance' out of which all phenomenal forms are designed or fashioned. And that 'unknown something' is beyond sense-perception and yet it underlies all the phenomenal beings and objects of the universe. Swami Abhedananda says "It is not the same as space or time, but it fills space, manifests itself in time, and cannot be limited by the category of causality".

What is the difference between space and matter? 'Space is extension, offering no resistance, but that which offers resistance and lies in space, is matter' According to modern science, matter, in its true nature, is a substance uncreated and indestructible, i.e., it is neither created out of nothing, nor can it go back into nothingness. So, after close observation, the philosophers have considered matter as that substance which makes up the objective world, whereas that which cognizes and directs the objective world, is the subjective world, or the mind or the spirit. Vedānta says that spirit and matter—the subjective world and the objective world—exist in the primordial ocean of the infinite substance, the Brahman. Swami Abhedananda gives an example of it and says 'This universe is like a gigantic magnet, one pole of which is matter, and the other is spirit, while the neutral point is the absolute substance. For this reason, these three, matter, spirit and Brahman are eternal'.

Now, from the discussion of the first chapter on spirit and matter, we come to know that matter and spirit are the objective and subjective sides of one and the same all-pervading substance, known as the *Atman* or Brahman, and without the *Atman* or Brahman, matter and spirit have no meaning and importance.

The second chapter deals with 'Knowledge of the Self'. Knowledge is of two kinds, phenomenal or relative and noumenal or absolute. Knowledge which we gain or gather from senses from the external world, is phenomenal or relative, and knowledge which transcends the limitations of time, space and causation and comes direct from the all-intelligence and all-consciousness *Atman* or Brahman, is noumenal and absolute. So if we wish to get the absolute knowledge, we must go beyond nature or the relative world and seek truth in the realm of the absolute Brahman. Nature is called nescience or *avidya*, which deludes us and creates confusion between the reality and the unreality. So we shall have to go beyond nature to get knowledge of the Self, and it should be remembered that 'Knowledge of the Self' is a figurative word, as ever-shining knowledge itself is non-different from the Self, or the Self itself is Divine knowledge or supreme consciousness.

The third chapter deals with 'Prana and the Self'. Swami Abhedananda first relates the story of asking boon of Self-knowledge from Indra. After presuming Self-knowledge, Indra said "I am *Prana*, know me as *Prana* or life. Worship me as the conscious Self, the source of intelligence. Here Indra used the word '*Prana*' for life-force or *mukhya-Prana*, which is non-different from the Self, but Pratapana took it as the sense-powers of speech, hearing, smelling, etc., Indra further said 'What is *Prana*, is *Prajna* or self-consciousness' and *Prana* is the source of all activities of the senses. The self-consciousness is one and not many. It lies at the root of all knowledge. In fact, Indra described self-consciousness as the centre of the wheel of a chariot. The material body is the chariot (*ratha*), and the self-consciousness is the charioteer (*sārathi*). The outer circumference of the wheel of the chariot or body is made up of sense objects, the spokes are the sense-powers and the nave (*nabhi*) on which the spokes are fixed, is the *Prana* or life-force which is non-different from intelligence and self-consciousness, and when we realize this truth, we realize the Self or Brahman.

The fourth chapter deals with 'Search after the Self'. Swami Abhedananda has related the story of Prajapati and his two disciples, Indra, the ruler of the *Devas* and Virochana, the ruler of the *Asuras*. Prajapati at first examined whether the hearts of Indra and Virochana were purified, because knowledge comes and is appreciated by those who are pure in heart. Now what do we mean by purity of heart? The word 'heart' is used here to signify the mind. The mind remains as impure when it is disturbed and is full of modifications (*vṛttis*), and it is pure when all modifications of it is quiet and calm. Sri Ramakrishna said that the Brahman remains beyond mind and intelligence (*manas* and *buddhi*), and when the positive and negative modifications (*samkalpa* and *vikalpa*) are calmed, then mind shines as pure intelligence, i.e., shines in its own glory, and that shining intelligence catches the divine glimpse and appreciates the Brahman. So Prajapati first examined whether his disciples, Indra and Virochana, were pure in heart.

From the *Chhandogya Upanishad* (I 7 23—VII 12 6) we come to know that Indra was really a seeker after absolute

Truth He appreciated all the teachings of Prajapati and was illumined with the Divine consciousness of the Brahman. But the demon-king, Virochana was impure in heart and so he failed to appreciate the teachings of Prajapati, and, consequently, failed to get the supreme knowledge of the Brahman. Swami Abhedananda relates the story beautifully and says that Prajapati directed his disciples gradually from gross subtle, and causal states—from *jagrat*, *svapna* and *susupti* and at last told them the secret of the *Atman*, the highest Being.

The fifth chapter deals with 'Realization of the Self'. Advaita Vedanta has raised questions as to whether realization is different Self. We generally say that we shall realize the Self or *Atman*, but, in truth, the Self or *Atman* is not different from us, so we realize the Self or *Atman* as our own and make him as our property. Advaita Vedanta says that realization itself is the Self or *Atman*, and, therefore, the Self or *Atman* is non-different from realization or *aparokhanubhuti*. Realization is not a process or action, but it is the Self or *Atman* or Brahman. So when we say that we have realized the Self or *Atman*, it means that for delusion or veil of nescience we fail to discover the self-revealing nature of the Self or *Atman* and when by discrimination (*viveka* and *vichara*), the veil of nescience is removed, the Self or *Atman* is revealed, and this revelation of the Self is an accomplished fact. This interpretation of realization of the Self is given from the standpoint of Advaita Vedanta, but from the viewpoint of other philosophic interpretations, realization somewhat differ.

Swami Abhedananda says that performance of duties (i.e. rites and sacrifices according to the *Karmamimamsa*) could neither bring peace to anyone, nor the reading of scriptures or books can do, but permanent peace comes through realization of the Self or *Atman*. An enquiry into real peace begins in the *Kena-Upanishad* and there it has been asked as to who is the director of the mind. The *Upanishad* answers "That which is the hearer of hearing, the thinker of thoughts, the speaker of words, the seer of sight, is the director." The *Upanishad* says that the conscious or all-knowledge Self which illumines the organic functions,

is the seer of sights, the hearer of words and the knower of all sensations, and, therefore, the Self is the director of the mind and the functions of the mind. The *Kena-Upanishad* further says 'Knowing this Self, the wise, being freed from this world, become immortal. Really Self knowledge (*Atmajnana*) brings to the soul absolute freedom, and immortality is our birthright. Swami Abhedananda says that ordinarily we say, we know a thing, the knowledge of the book, etc., but in this way, the Self or *Atman* can never be known or made an object of knowledge, because the Self or *Atman* is the Divine knowledge in itself.

The knowledge of the Self or *Atman* is neither a created, nor an achieved thing, but it is all the time an accomplished one. It is already there and we shall have to discover it only. It is like a forgotten necklace, and we shall have to remove our error about the necklace. Swami Abhedananda says "Therefore, the Self is neither known, nor be known but is beyond relative knowledge and ignorance." Therefore, the Self is the absolute Truth, which is inexpressible by speech. It is the illuminator of speech, but it can never be illumined by words. The Swami further says that the personal God, with a form and a name, is not the highest God. It is not the absolute Brahman. "When God is known, He is no longer God. He is our imagination. The absolute Divinity (Brahman) is different from that which is worshipped."

The Swami further explains the process of our perception (*pratyaksha-jnana*), because we realize the Brahman means we directly perceive the Brahman through higher intuition or *anubhuti*. When we see a colour, says the Swami, we find that sensation of colour is produced by light which is a certain kind of vibration of ether. A ray of light coming in contact with the retina, causes some kind of molecular changes in them, and this being carried by the optic nerves into the brain cells, creates certain molecular vibration in those cells. It requires a conscious ego to translate this vibration into a sensation, which we perceive and call colour. \* \* Therefore, behind all intellectual perceptions there remains a self-conscious ego. The individual conscious-ego is again illumined by the supreme ego, the self-shining Self or *Atman*. The individual ego is commonly recognized as a part of the

supreme or larger ego, the Self or *Atman*, but, in reality, the part is not separate from the whole, as a part of fire possesses the same power of burning like that of the whole, and so the *Upamashad* says "*purnasya purnamādāya purnamūvashishyate*", i.e., if the part is taken from the whole, the part too remains as the whole.

Swami Abhedananda says that Self-knowledge (*Atmajnana*) preceeds even the conception of God. If thought about God, which is in our mind, be separated from Self-consciousness, it instantly vanishes and becomes non-existent. Therefore, we know God, because the self-revealing light of the Self or *Atman* shines behind our ego. It has been said that when we try to know or realize our true Self or *Atman*, we do not know it as we know a book or a tree. The Self or *Atman* has no material form, so it is not realized by any relative knowledge. The Self or *Atman* is the absolute Being, so it is known or realized by knowledge which transcends all relations and adjuncts. The absolute Being is known as *sat-chit-ananda*, i.e., existence intelligence-bliss. Where absolute existence prevails, there prevails also absolute intelligence or knowledge, and where absolute intelligence or knowledge prevails, there prevails also absolute happiness or bliss. In fact, these three attributes are one and the same. The attributes also direct towards the attributeless absolute Brahman to them who attempt to realize the one and undivided Brahman.

The sixth chapter deals with Immortality and the Self. Swami Abhedananda relates the story of Yajnavalkya and his wife Maitreyi, which has been recorded in the *Brihadaranyaka-Upanishad*. After putting different questions to Yajnavalkya, Maitreyi came to know that immortal *Atman* cannot be realized by the possession of wealth and pomp. It is realized neither by name and fame, nor by acquisition of knowledge from the books, but is known by Divine intuition.

Yajnavalkya first explained what is true nature of the object of love. A wife loves her husband not for the husband's sake, but it is for the sake of the *Atman*, which shines within the husband. Similarly, husband loves his wife, for the sake of the *Atman* that is within the wife. In fact, people love their parents, children, husbands, wives,



property, wealth, and all other worldly things, because the *Atman* shines within all of them. Therefore, the *Atman* should be heard, concentrated, and meditated upon, and be realized and then immortality is gained. The *Atman* is the support or substratum of everything of the universe. It is the only source. As from one fire proceed smoke, sparks and flames, so from the *Atman* have come out all sciences, philosophies, arts, histories and all phenomenal and spiritual truths. As a lump of salt has neither outside nor inside, but it is a mass of taste, so indeed the absolute Self or *Atman* has neither outside nor inside, but it is altogether a mass of intelligence, unlimited, beginningless and endless. By right discrimination and proper analysis we can differentiate the Self from the not-self—the Reality from the unreality, and in this process of discrimination, we attain the Self. We must mentally reject everything outside of the real knower, the *Atman* by saying, not this, not this (*neti, neti*) and must realize the immortal *Atman*, which is all-knowledge and all bliss.

## CHAPTER V

### REINCARNATION

*Incarnation* contains illuminating discussions on *reincarnation*, *transmigration*, *resurrection*, *evolution*, *heredity*, etc. The great mystic Saint-philosopher Swami Abhedananda has intelligently raised various critical questions, and has given satisfactory rational and scientific answers to them. His mode of treatment as well as language are very fascinating, logical, and lucid. The thoughts and ideas underlying in them are deep and penetrating. He maintains throughout his discussions the Vedantic non-dualistic viewpoint and sublime Indian spirit. He says that the visible phenomena of the universe are bound by an universal law of cause and sequence. The effect is visible and perceptible, while cause is invisible and imperceptible. Everything gross is the outcome of a subtle cause. There is *something* behind this gigantic manifold universe, and it was not created out of nothing. The Swami upholds *satkaryavād* as do the Samkhya, Mimamsa, and Vedānta.

Swami Abhedananda is of the opinion that the subtle impressions (*samskaras*) are the maker or moulder of a man's character and destiny. The subconscious level of the mind is the storehouse of innumerable impressions of the incarnations as well as that of present incarnation. Man is an instrument in the hand of his hoarded impressions, but still he can control them by creating counter-impressions, just as habits are overcome by counter-habits. Man creates his future by reaping the consequences of the present, and, in this way, he is entangled in the cycle of birth and death. Hindus believe in the theory of reincarnation. They know that the Spirit or *Atman* is deathless and immortal. It takes the body as its instrument to work and to reap the results of his actions. The soul or *jivatman* passes through different grades of progress and reaches at last the ultimate goal, and attains to perfection.

The Swami's discussions on *incarnation theory* has proved

his profundity of knowledge and depth of learning. Especially the last lecture, *theory of transmigration*, is as unique as illuminating. In this lecture, the learned Swami exhibits his own original views, taking a bold stand on the rock of logical arguments. He accepts the conclusion of modern science, and rejects the rigid and gross theories of some modern scientists, agnostics and materialists, who admit the theory of heredity, and endeavour to explain everything by it. He refutes the views of the Christians, Jews, Moham-madans, and Parsees, as regards their beliefs in the theory of transmigration. He has said that the theory of transmigration or metempsychosis is believed by many philosophers, as the passing of a soul from one body into another after death. This belief is found even in Pythagoras, Plato and their followers. Plato has described in mythological languages in *Phaedrus* how the human souls go out of the dead bodies and take new ones for getting newer experiences. The Platonic idea of transmigration admits the successive lives after death. According to this theory, the souls are allowed to choose their destinies in accordance with their experiences or bent of character, but do not receive the natural consequences of their good and bad deeds. Plato believes that the souls generally choose their bodies in lower animals. But the Hindu view of transmigration is quite opposite to it. The Buddhist rebirth theory is slightly different from the Hindu one, because the Buddhists do not believe in permanence of the soul entity (*atta*), whereas the Hindus believe that soul is permanent, and its body is impermanent. Swami Abhedananda has shown the difference between Vedantic theory of reincarnation and Platonic theory of transmigration. He says that, according to the Vedantic theory, the germ of life passes through lower stages and comes at last to the higher human plane, and after coming to the higher plane, it does not retrograde in the lower animal bodies. The Platonic theory is opposite to it, because it tells that souls can retrograde to different animal bodies. But Swami Abhedananda says that although "there are passages in the scriptural writings of the Hindus, which *apparently* refer to the retrogression of the human soul into animal nature, still *such passages do not necessarily mean*

that the souls will be obliged to take animal bodies. They may have taken lives like animals even when they have human bodies, as we may find among us many people like cats and dogs and snakes in human form, and they are often more vicious than natural cats, dogs and snakes. They are reaping the results of their own *karmas* and manifesting their animal nature although physically they look like human beings." Swami Vivekananda has maintained the view of the traditional Hindu scriptures, but Swami Abhedananda has taken a very rational, scientific, and most reactionary view. Here lies a difference between Swami Vivekananda and Swami Abhedananda in their respective views. Mr Tylor, Prof Seth Pringle-Pattison, Dr Radhakrishnan and others uphold the same view as Swami Abhedananda maintains. Like the Swami, Dr Radhakrishnan says in his *Idealist View of Life* (1937, p. 292) "It is possible for man to degenerate into a savage being, but he is still a man \* \* \* It is possible that rebirth in animal form is a figure of speech for rebirth which animal qualities." Swami Abhedananda has further forwarded a strong and reasonable argument in support of his view that we "have already passed in the evolutionary process through the lower grade of animal organisms. Now that we have outgrown them, why should we go back to them?" In fact, in Swami Abhedananda's opinion, reincarnation of the soul is nothing but the fulfilment of ultimate purpose of its earthly life, it is a means to an end, and it is a marching towards the human prime goal which is the attainment of Godconsciousness.

## II

Swami Abhedananda has delivered lectures on *Reincarnation* many times before the learned audiences of the West. The Journal *Brahmavadin* (Vol III, April, 1898, No 14, 56) states "Some of the best lectures, as that on 'Reincarnation' for instance, have even been given three times and a fourth time has been requested." The Swami's first lecture on *Reincarnation* was mentioned on 13th February 1898 in New York, as we find in his *Leaves from My Diary* "On

February 13th, 3 p.m. on Reincarnation (repeated by request)" The second time he lectured on the same subject on the 13th March, 1898, at 3 p.m. on Sunday. The subject of the lecture was *Evolution and Reincarnation*. The Swami has thus mentioned it in his *Leaves from My Diary*. "On Sunday afternoon March 13th, at 3 p.m. I delivered lecture on *Evolution and Reincarnation* (which was published afterwards) before an audience of about 200. The lecture was highly appreciated by all who were present in the hall."

Again the Swami states in his *Leaves from My Diary*. "On Sunday, February 5th, at 3 p.m. (1899), I gave a public lecture on *Which is Scientific—Resurrection or Reincarnation?*" The audience numbered about 100. On March 15th, 1899, he delivered a lecture again on *Evolution and Reincarnation* by request. The Swami thus writes in his *Leaves from My Diary*, "On March 15th, at 8 p.m., it rained hard throughout the day. I gave a public lecture on *Evolution and Reincarnation* (repeated by request) for an hour and a half in the Assembly Hall. Prof. Jackson of Columbia University came to the lecture and became deeply interested in this subject. The audience numbered about 100." "On March 28, (1899)," the Swami states further, "it rained hard all day long. In the afternoon I went to see Mrs. Coulston at Mr. Leggett. Mr. Vanderbilt brought to me the proofs of *Reincarnation*. He had volunteered to have printed 2000 copies at his own cost and presented them to me. This was the beginning of my printed works. The proceeds from the sale of *Reincarnation* which at first contained three lectures (1) *What is Reincarnation*, (2) *Which is Scientific—Resurrection or Reincarnation*, (3) *Evolution and Reincarnation*, were kept separate and spent in printing other lectures and pamphlets. Mr. Vanderbilt told me that these lectures were so good and convincing that he wished everybody ought to read them. He deserved my hearty thanks for publishing my lectures on *Reincarnation* under the auspices of the Vedanta Society of New York City."

Again, a lecture on *Reincarnation* was delivered by Swami Abhedananda on 17th April, 1899, in Day Building Room 19 in which audiences were over 130 in number. *The Worcester*

Spy, (New York) of April 18th, 1899, says "The Swami Abhedananda lectured again last night before a large audience in L'arien Hall, 206 Main Street. The subject last night was *The Vital-Force and Reincarnation*".

### III

To discuss the subjects contained in the chapters of *Reincarnation*, it can be said that the first chapter deals with the problem of reincarnation. The Swami said that everything in this phenomenal and mental world is governed by the universal law of cause and effect. The effect is visible or perceptible, whereas the cause is invisible or imperceptible. All perceptible phenomena are the various expressions of different forces which act as invisible agents upon the subtle and imperceptible forms of matter, and when the subtle forces are objectified, they appear as gross objects, which are subject to birth and decay. The subtle body consists of internal organ or *antah-karana* with its different modifications like mind, intellect, egoism, memory, five instruments of perception (*manendriyas*), five instruments of action (*karmendriyas*), and five *pranas*. *Prana* means vital energy or force and not air.

The biological science says that the whole of the universe is built upon this fusion of male and female principles. Male and female are the positive and negative aspects of nature, thus to say that male is the positive or electrical quality and female is the magnetic, receptive or negative quality. When the two fuse creative action occurs. From the greatest planet to the tiniest chemical cell the same process goes on. It is really as if the world were an electric pole, containing vast numbers of other electric poles of all sizes down to the most minute. But the secret is that the Creative Force within us is one single force, whether it be used for physical or mental ends. We have the choice as to which we will direct this force, upwards and downwards. This force is called by the Indian thinkers the Kundalini which appears as a serpent of fire lying coiled at the base of the spine. If man steadily purifies his mind and nature through living chastely and moderately, he is able to magnetize the Kundalini serpent

upwards through the channel of his spine, until finally it reaches the Male-Female or Masculine-Feminine principles of the gram and fires them into co ordination<sup>1</sup>

Now, all actions physical and mental, create impressions (*samskaras*), which are stored up in the subconscious level of mind or consciousness. They remain latent for some time and then rise up when necessary (i.e., being instigated by will) in the form of mental waves and produce desires or *vasanas*. Every voluntary or involuntary action, physical or mental, corresponds to the dominant impressions stored up in the subtle body (*sukshma-deha*). The organs of the senses also correspond to the principal desires which are strongest and are ready to manifest. And it should be remembered that the human form generally corresponds to his will. So the outer nature is nothing but the expression of the inner nature. Again, when a man dies, the individual ego is not destroyed, but continues to exist in subtle or causal form. The thought, will or desire really moulds the inner nature of a man, and it has the power of selecting or attracting such conditions or environments in its way of manifestation. This process corresponds to the law of *natural selection*. Parents are nothing but the principal parts of the environment of the reincarnating individual. The Swami has mentioned about the reincarnation theory as believed by Pythagoras, Empedocles, Plato, Virgil, Ovid, Plotinus. He has said about this theory of reincarnation as stated by the Hindus, Gauls, Druids, Celts, Britons, Mohammedan Sufis, Jews, Hebrews, and other nations. The ideas of transmigration and metempsychosis were also prevalent among many ancient nations of the world. Origen and other Church fathers believed in those theories. They also believed that evolution depends on these three laws: *tendency to vary*, or *variation*, *natural selection* and *struggle for existence*. Science also explains evolution of mankind through these three laws.

Christianity and Mohammedanism believe in one birth theory. They also believe in the theories of predestination and grace. But their belief is not based on scientific ground, as

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Vera Stanley Alder, *The Finding of the Third Eye* (Rider & Company, London), pp. 6-7.

they cannot explain why one is born with good tendencies and another with evil ones, and, consequently, they make impartial and just God partial and unjust. God does neither create good, nor evil, but everything in this universe evolves from the *Prakṛiti*, in whose womb all the seeds of creation lie dormant in the form of unmanifested impressions, and when they are manifested, we call that condition as evolution, or creation, or projection (*śrīṣṭi*).

The second chapter deals with 'Heredity and Reincarnation'. The theory of heredity denies the existence of the human soul as an entity separable from the gross physical organism, while the theory of reincarnation admits the existence of soul as a conscious entity which is independent of the physical organism. The theory of heredity received a new impetus and strength since the introduction of the Darwinian theory of evolution of the species. The latest discoveries in physiology, biology, embryology and other branches of modern science said that the offspring not only resemble their parents, but also inherit all the individual peculiarities, life, and character of the parents. But this theory of heredity is not wholly tenable, because the parents may acquire certain characters by their individual efforts, but they cannot transmit them to their children. Swami Abhedananda says to recall Weismann's theory of the *continuity of the germ-plasm*. He denies the old theory that we inherit everything from our parents, but, as the germ-plasm contains the potentialities of all tendencies of growing and assimilating food and of increasing by means of division, the germ-cells or germ-plasms continue from one generation to another. They do not inherit all the peculiarities of the parents, but possess the predisposition or a potentiality of the tendencies which gradually develop into individual characters. Therefore, it is a fact that germs are not created by the parents, but they existed in previous generations. Now, this theory of *continuity of the germ-plasm* pushes the question of heredity to the door of reincarnation.

The third chapter deals with 'Evolution and Reincarnation'. Swami Abhedananda says that, according to science, phenomena of the universe are subject to gradual change and progressive development from a relatively uniform condition to a relative complexity. There are two principal factors in the process of



evolution the first is the tendency to vary, and the second is the tendency of environment to influence that variation, either favourably or unfavourably. The Swami has forwarded the views of Prof. Huxley, Prof. Calderwood, Arthur Thomson, Sir M. M. Williams and others, and says that evolution with all its variation is caused by the attempt of the potential powers to become actual, and evolution into another species is caused by the in-filling of nature, i.e., the nature is filled not from without, but from within. The germs are already there, but their development depends upon their coming in contact with the necessary conditions requisite for proper manifestation. Infinite possibilities are slumbering in the womb of germ of life, and none can tell when and how the slumbering powers will wake up and will begin to manifest.

The process of evolution is divided into some stages or gradations, as physical evolution of animal life reaches its perfection in human form, and human evolution reaches its climax in the realization of the perfect soul, the *Atman*. Again as the purpose and method of natural laws are uniform throughout the universe, the end of intellectual, moral, and spiritual evolution will be attained when intellectual, moral, and spiritual perfection are acquired. Intellectual perfection means *perfection of intellect*, moral perfection consists in the *destruction of selfishness*, and spiritual perfection is attained when the individual soul communes with the universal immortal Soul, the *Atman*.

Theory of reincarnation is the supplement to the theory of evolution, or it can be said that theory of reincarnation is a logical necessity for the completion of theory of evolution. In fact, reincarnation completes or makes perfect the theory of evolution, and explains the cause of the moral and spiritual nature of man.

The fourth chapter deals with 'Which is scientific—Resurrection or Reincarnation'. Swami Abhedananda said that under the dominion of Persia, the Jews were greatly influenced by the Persian religion. They were then divided into two classes, Pharisees and Sadducees. Pharisees adopted the religious ideas of the Parsees, and Sadducees were included in the Jewish ideas. The Sadducees were very orthodox and conservative in their faiths and ideas. They did not believe in the

ideas of angels resurrection of the dead, and reward and punishment after death. But the Pharisees were quite opposite in their faiths and ideas. Thus we see that the idea of resurrection first arose in Persia, and afterwards took prominent place in the writings of the New Testament, and was accepted by the Christian world. The Zoroastrians also believed that the soul of the dead hovers round the body for three night, and the soul only resurrects in a miraculous way. Similarly, miraculous was the resurrection of Jesus the Christ. St Paul declared emphatically that the whole of the Christian religion depends upon the miraculous resurrection and re-appearance of Jesus. It is a fact that St Paul said about resurrection of the spiritual body and not of the material body with flesh and blood, but his important point was afterwards overlooked by the Christian people.

Modern science does not believe in miracles (in resurrection), rather it wants to penetrate into the miracles in order to discover the universal laws that govern them. The theory of a miraculous resurrection says that the individual soul does not exist before birth. But that is not possible according to the law of nature. Science says that sudden creation out of nothing and a total destruction of anything are both impossible, as matter and force are indestructible. So the theory of resurrection goes against the conclusion of modern science, and, therefore, theory of resurrection must be replaced by the theory of evolution, or by that of reincarnation, which is based on scientific or physical laws as well as on moral or ethical laws. The theory of reincarnation is logical and satisfactory than that of resurrection.

The fifth chapter deals with 'Theory of Transmigration'. Swami Abhedananda says that this theory presupposes the existence of the soul as an entity, and the soul can take another new body after death. Most of the Christians, Jews, Mohammedans, and Parsees believe in one-birth theory, so they do not accept the theory of transmigration. The one-birth theory says that God creates the souls at the time of birth out of nothing, the souls do not exist before and are suddenly created by God. But this unscientific theory has been rejected by most of the rationalistic philosophers, scientists and followers of Vedanta. Among the Greek philosophers we find that

Pythagoras, Plato and neo Platonists believed in the theory of transmigration or metempsychosis of the soul. The original meaning of transmigration or metempsychosis was the revolution of the soul from body to body whether human, animal, angelic or of the gods. The migrating substance remains as a fixed quantity, whereas the bodies or mediums only change. Plato believed in this theory and in his *Phaedrus*, he described that the souls take or choose either human or animal bodies after their death. Virgil also admitted this theory. The Indian belief is quite opposite. The Indian thinkers applied the law of *karma*, or the law of cause and sequence, so as to explain the theory of transmigration. Therefore, Indian theory of transmigration or rebirth is different from those of Platonic, Egyptian and Buddhist. Swami Abhedananda says that the strict logical analysis does not believe in the retrogression of the human soul into animal nature, as held by Plato and his followers. "Although there are passages in the scriptural writings of the Hindus which *apparently* refer to the retrogression of the human soul into animal nature, still such passages do not *necessarily* mean that the souls will be obliged to take animal bodies". "The soul or germ of life, after passing through the lower stages, comes to the human plane and gains experience and knowledge and after coming to the human plane, it does not retrograde to animal bodies."

## CHAPTER VI

### DOCTRINE OF KARMA

*Doctrine of Karma* is a study in philosophy and practice of work (*karma*). The lectures contained in the book, were delivered by Swami Abhedananda in America. Originally there were two separate books, *Doctrine of Karma* and *Philosophy of Work*. First edition of those two books were first printed and published in America. The second editions of them were printed and published in India in 1944, and the third edition was published in 1947 in new form in one volume, one being closely related with the other.

The first chapter of the book, *Doctrine of Karma*, deals with 'Law of Karma'. Sri Krishna said in the *Bhagavad Gita* (III 5) that no one can remain absolutely inactive even for a moment. Propelled by the power of nature (*prakṛti*), one is forced to work. As work is inevitable in one's life, so one should work without asking the result, and the work without attachment to result will lead him to the highest attainment of Godconsciousness. Swami Abhedananda says that the world of phenomena is linked together in the universal and inevitable chain of cause and effect, and this chain is known as the law of causation. Really cause appears as an effect, or an effect is created by a cause. In the *Sāṅkhya*, Kapila said that effect remains in the cause, and destruction means the transformation of effect into cause, '*nāśah karanālayah*'. All sciences and all philosophies say that the law of cause and effect governs all phenomena and all the forces of nature, whether physical or mental, obey this law and none and nothing in this world can transcend this inscrutable law. From the movements of the planets round the gigantic solar system down to the falling of an apple or of a thing there are some causes and those causes may be said to be the vibrations of electrons. This universal law of causation is called in Sanskrit, the law of *karma*. *Karma* has been derived from the root, *kṛ*, means to act, and, therefore, any action, physical or mental, is called *karma*.

All *karman*s produce results being governed by the irresistible law of causation

Now, under the sway of all-pervading law of *karma*, there is no room left for any chance (*adrishṭa*) or accident, because, Swami Abhedananda says, "what we call happening by chance or accidental, is, in reality, the product of some definite causes which we may not know, or cannot trace, on account of our limited knowledge" Again that which appears to be supernatural or Providential to an unscientific mind, is natural to a scientist or a philosopher. Therefore, all events of chance, or so-called occurrences, are just as much governed by the law of causation of *karma*, as any ordinary result of some known cause

Swami Abhedananda has classified the results of various causes of nature into three categories, good, evil, and mixed (*sat*, *asat* and *mishra*). That which fulfils our interest, is called *good*, that which injures us in any way, is called *evil*, and the *mixed* result are those which are partly beneficial and helpful and partly injurious or harmful. In the *Bhagavad Gita* (XVII 48) Śrī Kṛṣṇa said "*sarvārambhaḥ hi doṣeṇa dhūmenāgniḥ sāvṛtāt*", i.e., as smokes are followed by fire, so in this world of relativity, within the limitations of time and space, works are followed by their defects and demerits and it is impossible to find any action which is absolutely good or bad. Again results of works are good or bad or mixed according to the circumstances of nature, because that which seems good in one circumstance, appears as evil in other circumstance, and so there is no universal moral law or order

The second chapter deals with 'Law of Action and Reaction'. The Swami says that every action must be followed by a reaction of similar nature. All motives, desires, thoughts and other mental functions being subject to the law of causation, or law of action and reaction, produce *good*, *bad* or *mixed* results according to the nature of those mental activities. Now, in the chain of cause and effect, it can be shown that each effect is latent in the cause and each is again latent in the effect. A seed contains the whole tree potentially and produces the tree and the tree again produces the seed. And so it is generally called that tree is preceded

by seed, or seed is preceded by tree. Again every thing that we possess in the life, is the effect of our previous action, both physical and mental. Our present character is the resultant of our past and our future will be determined by our present acts. So neither God, nor Satan, is responsible for our results, good or bad, and present or past or future.

Swami Abhedananda has refuted the hypothesis of predestination and grace in the face of law of action and reaction. He says that this hypothesis teaches that God settles the destiny of man before his birth and preordains before the birth of each man or woman what he or she will be in future. It is just like the play of *adrishṭa*, where *puruṣhakaṛa* has no role to play. But that is not correct, because a man or woman is not an instrument to be played by the whim of chance or *adrishṭa*. This hypothesis of predestination and grace makes us absolute automatic bound hand and foot by the chain of slavery. But men or women have sufficient power, i.e., will-power to do or undo any action or *karma*. They can change their conditions of life by the help of *puruṣhakaṛa* or self-effort and can make their life blissful instead of making it sorrowful. In the *Bhagavad Gītā*, it has been said that God neither rewards the virtuous, nor punishes the wicked, but God is the witness (*sakshi*) and is impartial and each individual soul reaps the result of his work he did in the past.

The third chapter deals with 'Law of Compensation'. Swami Abhedananda writes that doctrine of *karma* includes the law of compensation and the law of retribution. 'As every effect must have a cause, every consequence must have an antecedent, so also there must be equal balance between a cause and its effect, between an antecedent and a consequence.' In the river or ocean, we have seen that if there be a surging of a high wave, there must be a deep hollow at its sides, and if there be a flow of water here, there must be an ebb somewhere. So law of compensation is as irresistible as the law of causation and as rebuttleless as the law of action and reaction. This law exists in both in the planes of insentient and sentient objects. A man may reap the result of compensation for his works either in this life or after death in another incarnation, but if he denies pre-

existence and reincarnation of the soul, the chain of cause and sequence is broken or lost. But it is sure that causes determine the nature of effect and no man can violate the law of compensation.

The fourth chapter deals with 'Law of Retribution'. Swami Abhedananda says that according to the law of retribution, 'every action reacts and brings its own reward or punishment, first in the inner nature or soul, and then in the external circumstances in the form of gain or loss, propensity or adversity, health or disease'. The Buddhists have denied the existence of personal God like Kapila and Jaimini, but all of them have admitted the importance and influence of law of *karma*. But the Buddhists do not believe that the soul is a doer, performer, thinker, and enjoyer of acts and the words doer, performer, thinker, and enjoyer are mere modes of speech. They admit *karma* and say that *karmas* or actions constitute one's personality which exists even beyond death. They further say that mental and physical actions of an individual produce impressions (*samskaras*) in subtle deed-forms, thought-forms, and those impressions (*samskaras*) continue to exist even after death. And, therefore, there is no utility to admit a permanent soul-entity as enjoyer or sufferer of actions. Vedanta refutes this theory of the Buddhists and says that the law of *karma* necessitates the identity of doer, thinker, enjoyer, etc. Men performs actions and those actions are divided into *loui*, *sanchita* (accumulated), *prārabdha* (cause of birth and body) and *kriyamāna* (that is operating) and *āgāmi* (future). We have no control over the *prārabdha* and *kriyamāna karmas* and the *kriyamāna* one is already in action, but we can control the *āgāmi* or future actions. The Swami is of the opinion that the *kriyamāna-karma* can be controlled by producing new impressions (*samskaras*) of new actions (*karmas*) by *purushakara*, so as to counteract the old actions that are operating and are going to operate. The Swami has already refuted the theory that *adrīṣṭa* or *pārabdha* as the prime-mover of human destiny, and he says that by dint of self effort or *purushakara* all men or women can counteract *adrīṣṭa* or *prārabdha* and can design and control his life and can direct it in the new and novel ways of enjoying bliss and happiness,

The fifth chapter deals with 'Philosophy of Karma' Sri Krishna said in the *Bhagavad Gita* (IV 16)

किं कर्म किमकुर्मत कवयोऽपत्र मोहिता,  
तत्ते कर्म प्रबक्ष्यामि यज्ज्ञात्वा मोक्षसेऽश्नात् ॥

That is, even wise men are deluded and perplexed on this point, what is action and what is inaction I shall tell thee the philosophy of work, by knowing which thou shalt attain to absolute freedom from all imperfections

Philosophy of work means Karma Yoga, i.e., *karma* or action appears as Yoga, if it is selflessly and disinterestedly performed without seeking its result (*phala*). Really if we hope to get something and do not at the same time get it, we are disappointed and sorry, but if we do not expect any result, then failure will not bring unto us any disappointment. So it is our duty to do work and not to ask for its result, because hope of result is a kind of binding (*bandhana*). In the *Gita*, Sri Krishna also said 'योग कर्मसु कोशलम्' (250), i.e., Yoga means skill or dexterity in work. Wise men adopt those means which easily bring solution to the problem of work. The Swami has quoted the *sloka* of the *Bhagavad Gita*, where it has been said

कर्मण्यकर्म यः पश्येदकर्माणि च कर्म यः ।  
स बुद्धिमान् मनुष्येषु स युक्तः कृत्स्नकर्मकृत् ॥४।१८

That is, 'He who sees activity in inaction as well as that which is above all action in the midst of activities of mind, body and senses, is wise and intelligent among mankind, is a true Karma Yogi and a perfect doer or performer of all actions' Here we should specially remember the words, 'he who sees activity in inaction' and 'that which is above actions'. The real purport of the words or lines is that whenever we shall perform works keeping mind fixed on the *Atman*, our works will be regulated and we shall not hanker after the result of the works, but we shall perform every work in the spirit of service to God — 'ईश्वरार्पणबुद्धिः' and when we shall perform all works in the spirit of service, then our works will be known as Yoga and will be means to



salvation or *mukti*, otherwise we shall be known as selfish if we expect all the time the result of our works, and that will spoil the spirit of philosophy of work.

The Swami says that Karma Yoga is one of the methods for attaining to final goal of all human beings, and other three are Bhakti Yoga, Raja Yoga and Jnana Yoga. These are the *alternative* methods and Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa lays stress up this secret of alternativeness. He said *yata mata, tata patha*, i.e., all methods and schools of opinions are true, as they all lead men to salvation—the same goal.

Swami Abhedananda has placed five conditions for the accomplishment of mental or physical works, and they are (1) We must have a physical body, for it is the means as well as temple of God. It is also the storehouse of energy, as energies sleep there in the form of *kundalini*, (2) The sense of ego (*aham*) as the doer or actor, (3) We must have the instruments, the sense organs like eyes, ears, nose, tongue and sense of touch to come in contact with the experience of both physical and mental words, (4) We must have the desire or motive to work, and (5) There must be some sort of environment (*parivesha*). Again the results of actions performed under these five conditions can be divided into three: (a) Those that are desirable, because they help us to fulfil our aims of life, (b) Those which are not desirable, and (c) Those which are partly desirable and partly undesirable.

The lines of the *Gita* (IV 18) 'कर्मण्यकर्म यः पश्येदकर्मणि च कर्म. यः' etc., have already been explained before. Swami Abhedananda writes that something which is beyond all activities, is called in Sanskrit, *Atman*. It is the real knower and at the same time it transcends the category or adjuncts of knower, doer, thinker, etc. The *Atman* really transcends the categories of time, space and causation, because that which is subject to time, space and causation, is changeable. Time means *succession* and space means *co-existence*, and Kant called them 'forms of thoughts'. Swami Abhedananda says "One thought following another gives us a conception of intervals which we call time, while that which separates them, is what we call space." In Indian philosophy, time and space (*kala* and *desha*) are known as nescience or *maya*,

and when the transcending *Atman* descends in the field of *maya* and is conditioned by time and space, appears as the knower (*jñata*), doer (*karta*), thinker (*mantā*), etc. Sankara explained the theory of superimposition or *adhyasa* and said that though we are, in reality, the immortal *Atman*, yet when we identify ourselves with body, mind and senses, we are limited and think ourselves as the individual *jivas*. It happens for delusion or *maya*, but by the power of discrimination (*vichara*), when delusion or *maya* is removed, we recognize ourselves as the immortal *Atman* or Brahman. Philosophy of *karma* helps us to realize our undying glory of the *Atman*, and makes us immortal. The Swami has, therefore, instructed us to train our mind and also to open our eyes to the conditions under which we work in the universe.

The sixth chapter deals with 'Secret of *Karma*'. Swami Abhedananda says that we all are playing the drama of life in this stage of the world, but we shall have to know the ideal as well as purpose of our playing. It is not the thing that we shall continue to act on this world stage all through our life, but should remember that those who attain the goal, retire from the stage and appear no more in the stage, and live in bliss and happiness in the higher realm of Divinity.

The inner nature of all men is composed of three qualities, *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. Kapila defined them as the qualities (*gunas*) of the *Prakriti*, nay, these qualities constitute the stuff of the *Prakriti*. Kapila said that the balancing state (*samyavastha*) of those qualities is known as the *Prakriti*, and when they are separated or disturbed, evolution begins. These qualities (*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*) are predominant in all living beings, and they constitute the inner nature of them. Swami Abhedananda says that when desires and motives lie dormant, that latent or dormant state is known as *tamas*. It is the state of inertia or inactivity. It is the subconscious state and in this state hundreds and thousands of impressions (*samaskaras*) of present and past incarnations are stored up. These *samaskaras* can be called as germ of life possessed of infinite potentialities. When those germs of life are not active, that is the condition of *tamas*. Gradually they are active and pass through various

stages of evolution—from the vegetable into the animal kingdom and on to that of man. In the human form mind attains to highest state of activity, and this active state of mind is called *rajas*. The next state is known as *sattva* when the desires and tendencies are balanced and remain calm. This *sattva* state of the mind is a neutral and balancing zone of the two, *rajas* and *tamas*, activity and inactivity.

It should be remembered that no man in this universe can live without action or *karma*, and the *Bhagavad Gita* (3.5) also supported this view, while it said,

न हि कश्चित् क्षणमपि जातु तिष्ठत्यकर्मकृत् ।

कार्यते ह्यवशः कर्म सर्वं प्रकृतिजैर्गुणैः ॥

This is, 'none verily, even for a moment, ever remains doing no action, for every one is helplessly driven to action by the energies born of nature'. The inward tendencies of men drive them to work in the field and they cannot check, until and unless they control their mind and lead their mind towards God or the Brahman. The impressions of our life take the upper hand in designing and directing the present life and those of the present life will be the driving force of our future life. So there is a law that rules all our lives, present, past and future, and no man can escape from this inevitable and inscrutable law of nature.

Swami Abhedananda says "In this wheel of action and reaction, each individual soul is passing from one point to another, on and on, age after age. \* \* whether we believe it or not, it will continue to produce its results, just as the law of gravity operates, whether a man observes or disregards it or not". It should be remembered that the soul is not created by nature, but nature is working for creating experience of each individual soul. The soul is witness-like (*sakshi*) something within us and it is beyond nature and its laws. It is already free. But, yet it yearns for freedom, because it sometimes forgets its free and divine nature, being temporarily entangled in the mesh of *maya*.

Sometimes it is asked as to whether it is possible to work for work's sake. "In India", says the Swami, "every individual life is divided into four periods, each of which is fixed for

paying off debts to some portion of the world—to parents, society, spiritual teacher, or to our own higher Self. The debt which we owe to this higher Self, can be paid by realizing our true nature, by knowing who and what we are in reality and by emancipating the soul from the bondage of nature as well as from the irresistible law of *karma*." Now, it should be kept in mind that every force of nature is operating through the machinery of the human body, but being self-deluded we dream that these forces belong to us. Sri Krishna also warned us by saying "He whose mind is deluded by egoism, thinks, I am the doer" "अहङ्कारविमूढात्मा कर्ताहमिति मन्यते" (३।२७). Really delusion or *maya* makes us forget our divine nature, and delusion operates upon us when we are addicted to the drinking of wine of attachments to phenomenal beauties and pleasures. Attachments proceed from ignorance, and selfishness is the result of ignorance. The wise one does works for work's sake and thus cuts asunder the chain of *maya*. The Swami says "Liberated from the bondage of ignorance, selfishness and delusion and having cut asunder the thread which binds the soul to birth and rebirth, he attains at last to the realm of eternal peace."

The seventh chapter deals with 'Duty or Motive in *Karma*'. Swami Abhedananda says that activity is life, whereas absolute inactivity is death. But, according to the law of nature, all men are compelled to do some work, whether mental or physical. So work can be divided into three classes: (1) The first class includes all that we do for preservation of body and for gratification of senses, (2) The second class embraces all actions done from the sense of duty, and (3) The third class includes all actions done freely and also from the sense of love.

There is a difference between the two senses, sense of duty and sense of love. The Swami says that there is no such thing as duty in an objective sense. We cannot get it from outside, as it is purely subjective. "The feeling which binds us to these special acts of body and mind, is the sense of duty. Duty creates a kind of bondage between the individual and his environment." The idea of *ought* never leads us to real happiness, because the idea of sense of

*ought* binds men with obligation. But works done through the sense of love do not bind anyone with obligation. Swami Abhedananda writes that when real love or feeling of oneness awakens in the soul, we rise above all duty and work, not through a sense of obligation, but through love. "Love must be higher than duty, and where there is love, there can be no thought of duty." So all works performed through higher motive of love, takes the form of act of worship of the supreme spirit. But what do we mean by love? Love means the feeling of oneness, so when we forget our own selfish interest and sense of duality and work in the feeling of oneness, then our work is performed in the sense of love. This sense of feeling of oneness does not appear on the physical plane, but only on the highest spiritual plane. So duty or real motive in *karma* is to reach the Divinity through Karma Yoga, i.e., unselfish work done in the spirit of worship of God, takes us to the temple of Divinity.

Two appendices have been added to this book. The Appendix A deals with 'Delusion', and the other with 'Heart and Mind'. While explaining the meaning of delusion (*maya*), Swami Abhedananda writes that delusion does not mean non-existence, but it means unreal existence, or relative reality (*vyavaharika-satta*) which exists for the time being and has no permanent existence (*paramartha-satta*). The Swami says that the example of dream (*svapna*) will be appropriate and better than mirage (*marichikā*) to be used for delusion or *maya*. Because some people think that delusion is just like a mirage. But you cannot realize that (delusion) as a mirage so long as you are in it. "I should say it is more like a dream. Dreams are real so long as we are dreaming, but when we wake up they become unreal." The Swami says that the whole universe is pervaded by Truth, but we do not see it, we see only the appearance of Truth, and it appears for delusion. In Truth, delusion is a false knowledge (*mithya-pratyaya*) and when right knowledge comes, then wrong or false knowledge disappears.

The Appendix B deals with 'Heart and Mind'. The Swami says that heart refers to feeling or feeling property of percepts and concepts and the mind includes a lot of other activities and functions. Heart is known as

*chitta*, in which everything of the universe, physical and mental, is reflected. The mind or *manas* is the bundle of sensations, i.e., impressions of everything. The impressions are like dirt or dust upon the mirror of mind, and they will not die out unless they are forced out, and they will retain the germs of future desires and future life. What we call habit (*abhyāsa*) is but a series of impressions and they can be replaced or checked by counter-habit or counter impressions. Swami Abhedananda says that instead of indulging in desires or impressions some say, you should kill them out. "But you cannot kill them out" \* \* *we can only reduce the number of desires by discrimination and not allowing indulgence*. In that way we can purify our heart or mind. Purification of heart (*chittashuddhi*) is necessary for getting the glimpse of the transcendental Brahman, which shines all the time within us.

## CHAPTER VII

### *PATH OF REALIZATION*

*Path of Realization* comprises with seven illuminating lectures coming out from the lips of a man of Divine realization. The lectures were delivered in the classes in America from 1907 to 1916. The names of the seven lectures are *Search after Truth, Worship of Truth, Faith and Knowledge, Necessity of Symbols, Efficacy of Prayer, Ecstasy,* and *Salvation through Love*.

Swami Abhedananda being a man of Realization lays emphasis or importance on the spiritual life which is fruitful with direct knowledge of the absolute Truth in ecstatic vision. He says that though, in reality, a man is the *Atman* or Brahman, yet for the delusive power of *maya*, he forgets his real existence and essence and makes him entangled in the trap of the worldly chain of desires and attractions. So a man, the Swami says, requires a study or self-analysis and an awakening of consciousness of his real nature, or of recognizing his eternal immortal entity. In his discussion on *Search after Truth*, he emphatically says that by studying our internal nature or the subject side of the universe, we realize the existence of the conscious Self, which is the knower of both intellect and mind. With its various modifications and sensations, the mind thinks itself as an agent of all activities, but, truly speaking, the mind is an instrument and behind it there shines a conscious Self which is the knower of the external objects. This conscious Self is called in Vedanta, the *Atman*. The psychological truths will help us in studying our own nature and also in realizing the ultimate Truth that underlies both the objective world and the subjective world.

The *Atman* transcends the objective world and at the same time inter-penetrates or saturates both the subjective and objective world. Swami Abhedananda says that knowledge of Truth (*satyam*) brings freedom to the soul. We acquire knowledge from books and scriptures, but if that knowledge does not

enter into the core of eternal Truth, then it becomes merely the pursuit of intellectual and physical knowledge and cannot be said to be the transcendental intuition knowledge. In fact, 'all philosophies, all sciences, all religions, are nothing but so many attempts of the human mind to realize the eternal Truth'

All the Saviours and Teachers of different religions have preached the universal gospel of Truth, and though their methods of teachings differ from one another, yet the essence of their teachings help us to know the ultimate cause, or the reality of the source of everything. The theory of evolution, the theory of pleasure and pain, the theory of transformation of force and energy, and the theories of matter, mind and individual souls, are merely the facts and theories. They are the objective side of the universal subjective one. The universal subjective one transcends the categories of time, space, and causation, and Swami Abhedananda says that if you analyze time, you will find that it means nothing but *succession* which is a condition of thought, and space means co-existence. One thought following another gives us a conception of intervals, which we call *time*, while two ideas rise simultaneously and that which separates them, is what we call *space*. Similar interpretation has been forwarded by the Swami in his books, *Doctrine of Karma*, *True Psychology*, etc. But where there is neither *succession*, nor *co existence*, nor causal reactions of precedent and antecedent, there exists the attributeless transcending *Atman*, and that is the absolute Reality. Swami Abhedananda forwards many examples like piece of rope that looks like a snake in insufficient light, or rising of the sun in the east and setting of it on the west for the revolution of the earth, or running of the trees for the speed of the trains, and he says all these lookings or appearances give us false perception or wrong knowledge. From the study of modern science we come to know that all this variety of phenomena has been produced by the process of evolution from one homogeneous mass. It should be remembered that scientific researches are based upon gross sense perceptions, so they cannot take us to the realm which transcends sense perceptions. Therefore, to get the real intuition of the eternal



absolute knowledge, we will have to go beyond the sense-knowledge, nay, we will have to establish a communication between the sense phenomenal knowledge and the divine 'transcendental knowledge, knowing that knowledge is the Divine sense or knowledge if we properly analyze the sense or knowledge

The knower is the conscious Self in us, and mind and intellect are the instruments. Vedanta says that all knowledge come from the Self who is the knower within us and not from the external objects. The Swami forwards an example. "Do you think when you see a flower, the flower gives you some knowledge which you had not before? No, you are the sources of all knowledge and the flower gives you only a suggestion. It (flower) gives a knock to your being and in response to that knock you bring out the knowledge from within. You have never learnt anything from outside. So we cannot know things *per se* as they are in reality, but we know only our relations to them, or, in other words, we know only those mental changes which are produced when we come in direct contact with the objects of senses. Therefore, by studying our internal nature on the subjective side of the universe, we realize the existence of the conscious Self, which is the knower of intellect and mind with its various modifications and sensations, and which is also the knower of the external objects." The *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* (IV 5 15) says:

‘येनेदं सर्वं’ बिजानाति तं केन बिजानीयात्, \* \* विज्ञातारमरे केन बिजानीयात् ।’

Therefore, the absolute Truth cannot be realized by senses, mind, and intellect, but can be known only by the higher intuition, or it can be said that absolute knowledge is known only by knowledge. Swami Abhedananda says ‘By spirit, Spirit can be known. Spirit cannot be known by anything else. God can be known only by God. \* \* We cannot face the Absolute until we become the Absolute.’ Like attracts like. So the idea of incompleteness of our being or soul must be given up, it must be rectified or corrected, and then the idea of wholeness will make us realize our error.

of separateness and at the same time the unique existence of the non-different *Atman*. Christ said "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God". Purity of mind transforms the mind into pure consciousness, and the *Atman*, or Brahman is reflected in the mirror of pure mind or intellect. It should be remembered that the pure mind, pure consciousness, and the Brahman are one and the same. Vedantī says that though the Brahman is beyond the appreciation of mind or intellect, yet, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa says, the perfected or pure mind or intellect appreciates the all-consciousness Brahman.<sup>1</sup>

The second chapter deals with *Worship of Truth*. The divine manifestation of God is known as Incarnations or *Avatars*. They are the Saviours of the mankind, they are living embodiments of the absolute Truth. As Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa has said that if you taste the bread of sugar from different sides, you will taste the same sugar that saturates the bread. Similarly, the Saviours of the world said that if you sincerely strive for getting the realization of the absolute Truth by adopting different kinds of spiritual *sadhana*, you will realize the same *Atman* or Brahman. The ways and kinds may differ, but the goal is one and the same.

The worship of the Whole or *Isvara*, says Swami Abhedananda, "includes the worship of all divine Incarnations as well as the worship of the personal God of the various sects of the dualistic or monotheistic religions. By loving the Whole, we love all parts, however, great or small they may be". So he who has realized and loved God the Absolute, realizes the true essence of objects, animate and inanimate. From the minutest insect to the highest man all beings are his friends, because they are parts of the Whole, and this is the result of worship of Truth.

Worship of Truth is like an oblation of all desires for the material and mental world to the ever-blazing fire of the Brahman, and, in this worship, a devotee needs

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<sup>1</sup> Sri Ramakrishna said 'ब्रह्म मन-बुद्धिर् अगोचर, किन्तु शुद्ध मनो गोचर'. Now it should be remembered that the purified non-modalised mind cannot be said to be the mind, but can be said to be the pure consciousness.

nothing but constant remembrance or meditation. Through ceaseless devotion to Truth he crosses the ocean of death, attains to immortality and perfect freedom, and becomes one with the absolute Brahman.

The third chapter deals with *Faith and Knowledge*. Swami Abhedananda says that faith in God is the corner-stone of all religions of the world. "Human mind possesses that wonderful power which we call *faith*. It may be directed towards different objects of the world, or towards God. Faith towards God makes the mind to concentrate upon God, and thus quietens the mind, and make the individual soul to unite with God. This unison removes the darkness of nescience (*ajnana*), and identifies the individual soul with the universal Soul, the *Atman*. Faith should not be blind, but it should be backed by reason and knowledge. Blind faith proceeds from ignorance which is the mother of superstition and delusion. So we should learn to distinguish blind faith from true and rational faith. We should rise above sheer credulity and land in true and scientific faith which discloses the mystery of all religious and leads us to God-realization.

True faith and true knowledge come simultaneously. Blind faith being opposed to right knowledge, is also opposed to true and scientific faith. True faith in God involves right knowledge and realization of God. The first sign of true faith is *shraddhā*. True faith or *shraddhā* is an earnest and unbiased attitude of mind which is receptive of the absolute Truth and which leads the searching minds step by step in the realm of the Absolute.

The fourth chapter deals with *Necessity of Symbols*. A symbol is a sign that expresses something. A symbol is a word that conveys a meaning. The Indian poets say that as Siva cannot shine without Sakti, as the sun cannot exist without its rays, so a symbol or sign or word cannot exist without a meaning. Patanjali prescribed *Pranava* or *Omkaras* as the symbol for appreciating the indeterminate (*nirguna*) Brahman which is not reached by any senses, or mind, or intellect. Similarly, the Christians introduced the Cross (Latin *Crux*) to partake of the Holy Communion. All Christians practise the sacrament and partake of the Holy Communion by eating bread and drinking wine, which are the symbol of

body and blood of their Lord. The Greeks used the word to translate both *palus* and *crux*. Dr Fairar is of the opinion that the Cross as an emblem or symbol was introduced in or after the 6th century A.D., and then the Cross becomes the image of the Crucifix. He says that it may be imagined for many reasons that it was not introduced till the 2nd century, until any particular efficacy was attached to the Cross. Afterwards the Cross or *Crux* was mainly divided into four kinds, *Simplex*, *Decussata*, *Commisa* or *Ansata*, and *Immissa* or *Capitata* (Latin). The shape of the *Crux Commisa*, ascribed to St. Anthony, was the mystical T or Tau. The *Crux Decussata* was in the shape of the Greek letter X. The *Crux Immissa* was like the Latin Cross + on which Jesus the Christ was crucified. The Egyptian symbols of five planets had a Cross connected with each. Among the Hindus of ancient India the Cross was used very largely as a religious symbol long before the time of Christ, and even before Gautama Buddha, who lived about 600 B.C. In ancient India, the Cross was in the form of *Swastika* as *dakṣiṇāvarta* and *vāmāvarta*. This symbol of *Swastika* Cross has been found among the Buddhists of the pre-Christian era in their tombs, temples, inscriptions, and coins. Arthur Lillie, Lundy, Bunsen, Smith and Fuller, Crookes, Sir M. M. Williams and other Western savants have dealt with the problem of Cross and *Swastika*.

The ancient *Swastika* symbol was gradually transformed into Triangle (upward V Vedic and downward Λ Tantric), Christian Trinity or God the Father, God the Mother and the Holy Ghost, Hindu Trinity or Brahma-Vishnu-Siva, Dag or Fish, Serpent, Eagle, Dove, Lamb, Rose, Egg, etc. The Greek god Apollo was worshipped in the form of a serpent, and the serpent was conceived as the solar god. Swami Abhedananda says "The serpent is an emblem of evil (or limitation), when it is represented with its deadly fangs, and 'an emblem of eternity' (or universalism) or 'the wisdom of the sun' when it is used with its tail in its mouth, thus forming a circle." The Ramakrishna Order incorporated this idea of serpent along with the waves of the ocean, rising sun, and lotus. Swami Abhedananda introduced in the Ramakrishna Vedanta Math the symbol of the serpent with

its tail in its mouth, along with rising sun, wavey ocean, lotus and *Swastika* on the rising sun, thus making the emblem of eternity representing a non-sectarian all embracing symbol. The Persians, Chinese, Tibetans, and Jews—all incorporated the symbol of *Swastika Cross* in some different shapes. In the whole Christendom, the Egg was recognized as a symbol of Easter, and it has an old history. In the Hindu mythology or *Puranas*, Egg has been conceived as an emblem of evolution. The Egg has been described in the Rig Veda as *Hiranyagarbha-Brahma* 'हिरण्यगर्भः समवर्तताम्रे, भूतस्य जात' पतिरेक आसीत्' (Rik X 121). In Christianity, we found Madonna as the symbol of the Virgin Mary. Mayadevi, the mother of Gautama Buddha and Devaki, the mother of Sri Krishna, were worshipped as the symbol of Queen Heaven. The Crescent or Crescent-Cross became the symbol of the Mohammedans. The five-pointed stars which the Mohammedans placed on the top of their Crescent, is the Pentacle, which is no other than the symbol of the *Purusha* or Siva, the male principle of Tantra and the counterpart of *Prakriti* or Sakti. The Egyptian Isis, the Babylonian Chaldeans, and Assyrian Miltta were also worshipped as the virgin Goddess, and virgin Goddess was no other than the Dawn Goddess *Usha* of the Hindus.

Thus God, or the *Atman*, was apprehended and worshipped through symbols and images. In the *Upanishads*, the *Purusha* or *Atman* has been conceived as the shining deity in the cave of the heart. The heart has been conceived as both cave and lotus.

- (a) गुहाहितं गह्वरेष्टं पुराणम् (कठ १।२।१२)
- (c) अङ्ग छमात्रं पुरुषो मध्ये आत्मनि तिष्ठति (कठ १।२।८३)
- (b) गुहा प्रविश्य तिष्ठन्तम् (कठ १।२।७),

The Vedic religion is very liberal. It has prescribed different symbols as the means or medium to conceive about the absolute Truth. The symbols are necessary for those who try to meditate upon the Absolute which is, in reality, nameless and formless. It is a method of approaching to the indeterminate (*nirguna*) Brahman through the symbol as medium, the determinate (*saguna*) Brahman.

The fifth chapter deals with *Efficacy of Prayer*. All kinds

of prayer presuppose an absolute faith in certain religious doctrines and dogmas. We will have to start first with a belief in a personal God, and then we will be able to reach the impersonal God. The more human the conception of God is, the greater is felt the necessity of prayer. The prayer depends entirely upon the conception of a personal God with human attributes and human feelings.

There are different kinds of prayer. The prayer for material benefits is worst, as it binds men into the den of desires, which are no other than delusion or *ajnana*. Prayer brings mental changes which also brings a change in the physical plane. Prayer is nothing but a mental desire which generates new currents in the system, and these currents produce certain results. Again true prayer is the mental and verbal expression of the highest spiritual idea. True prayer is said to be heard by the Supreme Being when we remember our spiritual nature. God does not hear the expressions of our desires, but when we long for that emancipation which is the highest ideal of life and try to attain it with strong determination, then that true prayer of ours is fulfilled. The form of true prayer has been declared by the Seers of Truth.

असतो मा सद्गमय,  
तमसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय,  
मृतोर्माऽमृतं गमय,  
आबिबाबिर्भ एधि,  
रुद्र यत्ते दक्षिणं मुखं  
तेन मां पाहि नित्यम् ।

The kind of true prayer removes the darkness of ignorance or nescience, and takes us to the state of God-realization.

The sixth chapter deals with *Ecstasy*. Now, what is an ecstasy? Ecstasy is a state of absorption into the feeling of the transcendent Reality. "In this state, the soul's perception is not confined to the sense plane, or to the objects of the material world, and transcending them it perceives the vision of the spiritual world." So this state of ecstasy is different

from the state of spirit communication or trance or hypnotic sleep

Ecstasy is entirely a subjective phenomenon. There is no objective sign other than the trance-like condition of the physical body. In that state of complete absorption, the absorbed seer talks in an unknown tongue and feels extreme joy and blissfulness. This state comes to the soul at the sight of spiritual ideal. It can be called the union with God. How can this divine state be attained? Vedānta philosophy has forwarded many methods by which the Sadhakas can attain the state of absorption in the all-love and all-consciousness Absolute.

Bhakti Yoga or the path of love and devotion is the easiest of all. Most of the Hindu, Buddhist, German, English, Spanish, and Mohammedan, Sufi mystics have attained this blissful state through love and devotion towards the all-merciful God. Bhagavan Śrī Rāmakrishna, the latest Divine manifestation of the present age, showed in his life all the stages of ecstasy as described in the passages of the religious history of the world. Swami Abhedananda says: "We have seen his *mahābhava* many a time at Dakshineswar, Cossipore Garden and Shyampukur House and at that time he had no sensation of the external world. He had the power of rousing ecstasy (*bhava-samādhi*) in his disciples by a single touch."

In the *Paṭanjala-darśana*, Patañjali described different types of *samādhi*, such as *saṁvīkalpa* and *nirvīkalpa*, *samprajñata* and *asamprajñata*, *śaṁvītarka* and *nirvītarka*, etc. Besides, there are *jada samādhi*, which is an inferior one, and *dharma-meghe-samādhi*, *śaṁsitā-samādhi*, etc. In the Rāja Yoga, the attainment of the highest state of *samādhi* is not confined to any age or clime, nor it is limited by creed, doctrine or dogma of any special religion. But, in Bhakti Yoga, there are such limitations. Vedānta philosophy holds a non-dualistic viewpoint, and it prescribes the path of discrimination (*vichara*) or knowledge (Jñāna Yoga) for the attainment of ecstatic vision, whereas Vaiṣṇavism, Sufism, Christianity, Buddhism, Jainism and other dualistic religions adopt the path of love and devotion for that attainment. For the immediate experience or knowledge (*aparokṣhānubhūti*) of the absolute (indeterminate) Brahman, non-dualistic Vedānta has prescribed the

methods of *shravana*, *manana*, and *nididhyasana*. The *Vivarana* school of Advaita Vedanta has given importance upon *shravana* or hearing of the *mahāvākya*, '*aham brahmāsmi*' with ratiocination (*vichara*). Vivarana school says that *shravana* is essential and primary one, whereas *manana* (ratiocinative thinking) and *nididhyasana* (absorbing meditation) are secondary one. The Raja Yoga says that if you have faith in yourself, that you are a soul, a self-conscious spirit, you will be able to attain to that state. First you know your own self, and then by proper practice if you separate your self from the physical organism, you will enter into the state of ecstasy. The practice of concentration (*dharana*) will be developed into that of meditation (*dhyana*) and eventually meditation leads to the state of ecstasy (*samadhi*) to God-consciousness.

The seventh or last chapter deals with *Salvation through Love*. Swami Abhedananda has given different examples of ideas of heaven or salvation among the Parsees, Jews, Christians, Mohammedans of Arabia and Persia, Teutonics and Norwegians, Scandinavians and other nations, and has shown how those conceptions differ from one another, but it is a fact that every nation aspires for eternal peace and happiness. In this respect, Vedanta is very frank and straightforward. Vedanta does not deny the existence of heaven, but says that going to heaven, or to any *loka*, cannot be called the attainment of true salvation or *mukti*. The *lokas* or realms like *brahmaloka*, *dhruvaloka*, *svargaloka*, *chandraloka*, are not eternal, as men go to those realms or *lokas* as a result of performances of sacrificial functions or good works, remain there for some years, and come down again to this phenomenal world when their fruits of good works are completely enjoyed— 'क्षीणे पुण्ये मर्त्यलोकं विशन्ति'. The Swami says "At the end of the period of enjoyment of the fruits of their works, they shall be forced to come back to this earth and shall be born again to perform new *karmas*, and make further progress."

True salvation or perfect freedom does not begin after death as it is believed by dualistic religion, but it commences here in this life. Blessed are they who have tested that Divine Love. Divine love and absolute cessation of all desires



for phenomenal pleasures and enjoyments go together hand in hand. Cessation or renunciation of desires for earthly enjoyments purifies the mind and that means the mind is transformed into pure consciousness or Divine love. Pure consciousness or Divine love brings the highest ecstatic condition in which the individual soul communes with the universal Spirit. Divine love transforms the human nature into Divinity which is known as freedom and blissfulness and it is known as true kind of salvation or *mukti*.

## CHAPTER VIII

### *DIVINE HERITAGE OF MAN*

Man, is not in reality entangled in the chain of nescience, but he is free all the time and is the children of eternal Bliss. The mystery is this, that he identifies himself with the mortal body which borns and dies and creates the painful history of life and death, and this identification happens for non-knowledge of his Divine heritage that he is immortal by nature, and is the immortal *Atman* which knows no birth and death and any other changes.

*Divine Heritage of Man* contains eight chapters dealing with God and His existence, form, attributes, relation, incarnation and inseparability with man. The chapters were originally in lecture form and they were serially delivered by Swami Abhedananda, before the talented American audience and were afterwards printed in book-form.

The first chapter of this book deals with 'The Existence of God'. Really if any thing exists, one can ask about it or can make enquiry about it. In the *Katha-Upanishad*, it has been said *tasya bhasa sarvanudam vibhati*, i.e., for the existence of the Brahman, everything of the world exists. Really God or the Brahman is the perennial source of all phenomenal objects. It is the assuming ground and cause of all things of the world. The Swami says that it is the nature of the human mind to doubt and to know the real cause or substance behind this gigantic universe. Something cannot come out of nothing, and this universe with its manifold beings and objects has been created or designed by someone who is all-powerful and all-intelligent. Swami Abhedananda says "For hundreds of years philosophers, scientists and theologians among all nations have been bringing forward proofs either to show that there is such a Being as God or to deny His existence entirely." Now, if we have already a conception of God as the First Cause, then all the inductions and inferences which maintain that idea will naturally appeal to us and we take them for granted. Swami Abhedananda says that those whose minds are not

biased or influenced by any such idea, belief or conception, may fail to find any convincing proof and may, therefore, deny the existence of God

Now, it is a fact that as there is creation, there must be some creator, as pots are not made without a potter. So those who naturally believe in God as the Creator or the First Cause of the universe, he will have to determine whether God, the Creator, is material cause or efficient cause, or is both the causes. The Swami says 'We know that these two causes are essential for the production of a thing, as, in the case of a pot, the potter is the efficient or instrumental cause and earth as the material cause'. The philosophers differ from one another so as to correctly determine the cause. Swami Abhedananda further says that we are often confronted with some difficulties to determine God as the material cause, because God, in truth, is unlimited by matter, so whenever we ascribe the attribute of material cause to God, we automatically limit Him by matter. If, on the contrary, the material cause be the First Cause, then God is liable to be involved in the process of evolution which means He is liable to series of changes. But that is impossible, as God, in reality, transcends all changes of phenomena. Again, he forwards, if we accept the argument that moral laws presuppose a law-giver, then that presupposition will not also prove that God really exists, since we know that natural laws do not presuppose a law-giver. So we shall be unable to know what do we mean by 'law'. The Swami says that the forces of nature are operating in the universe in certain modes and when regularity and uniformity of these modes are observed and interpreted by human mind, they are known as 'laws', and, consequently, these laws are to be found neither in nature, nor outside of nature, but in the human mind. Again, we find that as in external nature the natural forces, acting under regular modes, do not presuppose a law-giver, so it can be shown that moral laws are but modes in which natural forces operate on the moral plane, so need of a moral law-giver is not necessary, and all such conceptions of God as the natural or moral law-giver are rejected or thrown aside by the advanced thinkers. In this age of science and reason, we do not bother our heads to find out the existence of God.

Modern astronomy discloses the fact that this earth is considered as an infinitesimal point compared with the immensity of space. But there must be something beyond or within the nature or vast universe, which controls or directs the limitless activities of the vast universe. Modern science also tells us that there is an eternal invisible substance which is neither increased nor diminished, nor can be imagined as the support of the universe.

But human mind or intellect is not satisfied with this indefinite something which has been imagined as the background or cause of this vast universe. It yearns to know that something definitely, and it is also natural that as we are constantly coming in contact with the surrounding finite things or objects of the universe, so we desire more to know something infinite which is beyond finiteness and transitoriness. Now, from this desire, there arose many thinkers of different types of different schools. Investigations into the enquiry of existence of God or First Cause were made both from objective side and subjective side and conclusions were arrived which were not complete but one-sided. At last careful study discloses the fact that objective side and subjective side of truth really form the complete aspect of truth, and that complete aspect which is related to both objective and subjective sides, is the common neutral object, and that common neutral object is the real something which is both cause and ground of the phenomenal universe. Swami Abhedananda says

'In ancient India, the question was asked—'What is God?' The answer we find in Vedanta 'That from which all animate and inanimate objects have come into existence, in which they live and play like waves in the sea, and into which they return ultimately at the time of dissolution, know that to be Brahman, or the infinite substance, or God'. In this connection, the Swami has distinguished the meanings of the word 'to know' and 'to realize'. 'To know' means, the Swami says 'To perceive through senses which are under limitation and 'to realize' means something more than ordinary knowing that is above limitation. So, we really wish to know God and to realize God, and we shall have to enter into the state of God-consciousness. It is a state where everything is fulfilled and nothing remains unrevealed.

The second chapter deals with 'Attributes of God' Swami Abhedananda says that those who believe in a personal God, give Him a human form, human attributes and human personality, because it is natural for a man to conceive about God with human form and qualities. God or *Isvara*, according to Advaita Vedanta, is possessed of two attributes or adjuncts, material cause and efficient cause. As a spider is both the instrumental and material cause of the net he creates or rather projects from within, so Vedanta says that the Brahman projects the world-appearance and he enters into it '*tat sristvā tudevānu-prābishaḥ*', and for this reason the Brahman is recognized as both material and efficient cause. But from the viewpoint of strict logic of Advaita Vedanta, the attributes of cause and ground are the imposed ones (*anipita sattā*), and not real. When we impose any attribute upon the causeless and groundless Brahman which is one without the second, we limit the limitless Brahman with time, space and causation, which are known as *maya* or nescience.

The third chapter deals with 'Has God any Form?' Swami Abhedananda says that all the ancient nations of the world conceived God as personal (*saguna* and *sakara*) with human form gradually developed from a belief in many tribal gods or natural gods. The ancient Greeks like the primitive people worshipped many natural gods like Zeus, Apollo, Athene, and others. The Vedic poets also personified the forces of nature and gave them human forms and attributes.

Now, it can be asked as to why were the forces of nature personified. Because wherever the primitive men saw any activity or motion, they compared it with the conscious activities of their own bodies and limbs of the bodies, and thought those activities to be the conscious acts of some superhuman being, possessing will-power, and that superhuman being is God who is the mover of the sun, moon, stars and other planets. Now the forms (i.e., imposed forms) of God are in accordance with the ideal of the worshippers. The worshippers belong to many religious faiths and doctrines, dualistic, qualified non dualistic and non-dualistic. The Swami has related the story of Prahlada who was a devotee and a lover of God. Prahlada said to his father Hiranyaka-

shipu that God has many forms and He can manifest Himself in any form He likes. Again the Swami has related the story of Hanumana elsewhere and has said that Hanumana believed that God appears to different believers of different doctrines and faiths in form or without form. So, from the viewpoint of strict Advaita Vedanta, God who is really the all-intelligent Brahman has no form, as a form is phenomenal, and, therefore, it limits the limitless Brahman with adjunct (*upadhi*), which is unreal being changing.

The fourth chapter deals with 'Fatherhood and Motherhood of God'. Swami Abhedananda says that the religious history of the world shows that conceptions of God as the Father and Mother of the universe prevail among all the ancient nations of the world, though this conception first arose among the Aryan nations of India. It is seen that all our conceptions of God begin with anthropomorphism and end in de-anthropomorphism. Now, the word Jupiter or Zeus-Pitar is called in Sanskrit as Dyus-Pitar or Dayus Pitar. In the Rig Veda (III 20) we read '*dyaus me pita janita nabhi ratro*'. Here the word '*pita*' literally means 'father' or protector. Again in the Rig Veda (V 6, E), Prajapati has been addressed as 'Pitar' or the Father and the protector of the universe and its beings. The Swami has quoted ten verses from the Rig Veda and has shown that the word 'Prajapati' conveys the same idea. "Thus we see," says the Swami, "that in ancient India God was conceived as both the Father and the Mother of the universe centuries before Jesus was born." However the Greeks, the Hebrews and other ancient nations conceived the masculine element of nature. The Christians admit the nature as the female principle though she is never adored or worshipped. Modern science traces the whole phenomenal universe back to the state of eternal energy, which is known as *Prakriti* or the all-pervading Sakti. Vedanta has conceived two aspects of the eternal Sakti, which are Vidya-Sakti and Avidya-Sakti, and has said that Vidya-Sakti has a tendency to lead all to Godward, whereas Avidya-Sakti brings back from Godward. The Hindus worship God as Vidya-Sakti or Divine Mother, the personal God or *Isvara*.

Swami Abhedananda says that Vedanta philosophy recognizes both fatherhood and motherhood of the personal God,

but at the same time it teaches that the Brahman, the real essence of everything of the universe, is absolutely above the conceptions of Fatherhood and Motherhood as these are also attributes and attributes have the power to limit the limitless Brahman

The fifth chapter deals with 'The Relation of Soul to God' Swami Abhedananda says that relation of soul to God presupposes the existence of God and from the enquiry or explanation of our relation to God and to the universe arose various schools of philosophy and different schools of religious thought and belief among the different nations of the world. There are three main schools of dualism, qualified non-dualism and non-dualism, and though those schools hold different doctrines and faiths, but their ultimate goal is one and the same

The ancient materialists like the modern agnostics and atheists consider the sense perception as the highest standard of knowledge and experience and deny existence of everything which is not perceived by gross senses. But according to the law of reaction, idealists or spiritualists who consider everything external as the manifestation of their mind or idea or spirit, point out the defects and fallacies of the materialist thinkers.

When relation of soul to God is discovered and established, the spiritual *sadhakas* believe that sooner or later, each soul is bound to attain salvation or *mukti*, and salvation is birthright of every soul, nay, every soul is essentially the Brahman '*jiva brahmaiva napara*' Swami Abhedananda says "They sometimes compare God with a gigantic aspect and the individual soul with the point of a needle, and say, as a magnet attracts a needle, so the great God attracts the individual souls towards Him through love, and magnetizes them as it were by His divine grace and power" Love for God is an important tie that binds God with the sincere soul and removes all differences between them. Relation of soul to God comes through intense sense of love for God and without this love the power of discrimination (*vichara*), concentration and meditation (*dharana* and *dhyana*) upon God are not fruitful. Now, this spiritual practice through love for God is dualistic, and there are spiritual *sadhanas* from qualified non-dualistic and non-dualistic or monistic standpoints. The *sadhaka* who

marches towards God with his faith in qualified non-dualistic doctrine, thinks himself the part (*amsha*) of God, loves God and resignates his individual will to the cosmic will of God and thus attains to salvation. And the *sadhaka* who believes in non-dualistic doctrine, removes from him the idea of separation from God, breaks up the chain of delusion or *maya* and through *jnana-vichara* realizes that he and the Brahman are one and the same. Every relation then merges into one God, the Brahman.

The sixth chapter deals with 'What is an Incarnation of God'. Swami Abhedananda says that in the *Bhagavad Gita*, Sri Krishna has professed that whenever religion declines and irreligion prevails, I manifest myself to protect the righteous, to destroy evil and to establish true religion (IV 7, 8). From this Divine saying of Sri Krishna, Incarnation of God is proved. The Swami writes that before the doctrine of the Divine Incarnation of Jesus the Christ was established and accepted by the Church, the early Christians believed in the Trinity, the Father, the Word and the Holy Ghost, and constantly discussed the most subtle and profound questions concerning the nature, generation, distinction and qualities of the three Divine persons of the mysterious triad. Really the Trinitarian controversies first broke out in the Christian schools of Alexandria in Egypt and took a new form during the time of Constantine the Great. In India, the idea of Trinity evolved in most ancient time. In the *Puranas*, we clearly find the mention of Trinity, Brahma, Vishnu, and Mahesvara. But the seed of this idea of Trinity lies in the Vedas, where Rudra, Krishna-Vasudeva, and Prajapati have been mentioned. It has been mentioned that in the age of the *Mahabharata*, Sri Krishna has admitted the theory of Incarnation. In the Gaudiya-Vaishnava literature, the significance of the word Incarnation or *Avatara* has been clearly given, and some are of the opinion that the very word '*Avatara*' is coined by the Vaishnavas of India. Now, whatever may be the history behind the word of *Avatara* or Incarnation, it is a fact that the religious thinkers of India have admitted the existence of some manifestations of supernatural power to project, to maintain or sustain and to destroy the world and its beings. God has been regarded as



the highest manifestation of the world and all kinds of power, beauty and ability have been imposed upon Him so as to take Him as the Lord of the universe, and from this idea evolved the conception of Incarnation of God as the Saviour of the World

Swami Abhedananda says "India is the only country where the origin of this idea can be traced back and where the belief has prevailed from prehistoric time in the Indian countries. This idea of Incarnation also evolved in late times among the Christians, but one of the principal points in which the Hindus differ from the Christians is in maintaining that, if God incarnates or expresses His divinity in human form, His incarnation cannot be limited by time, place or nationality. The Hindus believe that there were many incarnations before and have been many since the advent of Christ \* \*". The Swami has explained the meaning of incarnation of God according to Vedanta, and has shown the difference between an ordinary human being and an incarnation of God. The Swami has also shown the difference between a holy sage and an incarnation. He says that "a holy sage may be compared to a reed floating in the ocean of life, which cannot bear the weight of even a crow, when a Saviour descends, He easily carries thousands across the ocean like a large powerful steamer which moves swiftly over the waters touring rafts and barges in its wake". An incarnation of God descends in this world of *maya* with human forms and human qualities, and he lives, moves, talks and does everything like an ordinary man, but an ordinary man cannot recognize him easily. But, the Swami says, a Divine incarnation shows from childhood that he is a born master of mind and senses and the real Lord of nature. He does not also forget that he has come to the world to help mankind. "The latest Divine incarnation was one who appeared in the middle of the nineteenth century. He lived near Calcutta and his name was Ramakrishna". He is now worshiped by thousands of people all over the world.

The seventh chapter deals with 'Son of God'. Swami Abhedananda writes that after studying carefully the synoptic Gospel we learn that there prevailed among the authors of these books two conceptions of the Son of God. Mathew and Luke

accepted Jesus the Christ as the only begotten son of God. The other conception of the Son of God which we find in the Fourth Gospel, has a very deep philosophical significance. Many of the Oriental scholars and higher critics of the New Testament say, the writer of the Fourth Gospel must have been a follower of Philo, because in this Gospel alone Jesus the Christ is identified with the Greek Logos, which was explained by Philo as the only Begotten Son of the Almighty Heavenly Father.

Then Swami Abhedananda deals with the theory of Logos that prevailed among the Greek philosophers. The Swami says that the real meaning of the passage "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" will be clear if we remember that the author of the Fourth Gospel identified the Word or Logos of Philo with Christ, but not with Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Mary and since then Christ has become the only Begotten Son of God. The students of Vedanta, on the contrary, say that Vedanta proves the Divine sonship of each individual soul, each soul is the child of immortal Bliss, and each *Jiva* is the Brahman or *Siva*. "Therefore, the expression of 'Son of God' shows in a metaphorical way the extrinsic variety and the intrinsic unity that exist between the soul of man and the supreme spirit." All the great saviours of the world are also recognized as sons of God and the Swami says "All the great saviours of the world like Krishna, Buddha, Christ were conscious of their divine sonship from their childhood and never forgot it."

The eighth chapter deals with 'Divine Principle in Man'. Really man is the epitome of the universe, and whatever exists in the world, is to be found in the body of man. The Swami says that human nature seems to be a most wonderful blending of that which is animal, with that which is called Divine. Vedanta says that you are already that, i.e., Brahman, but for nescience or *avidya* you forget your divine heritage and think yourselves as bound from head to foot in the world of ignorance. Sankara says that this forgetfulness happens for *adhyasa* which is the nature of delusion. The higher we rise above delusion or animal plane, the wider becomes the circles of self love and instead of being confined to the body and senses, we

approach the Divinity, because the Divine principle is the universal Being whose love flows equally towards all beings.

Swami Abhedananda is of the opinion that awakening of Divine consciousness may come at any time and under any circumstance. Though it is commonly believed that spiritual practices (*sadhana*) is the pre-condition to Divine awakening (*anubhuti*), yet, according to Advaita Vedanta, awakening is never conditioned by any object of law. Awakening of Brahman-consciousness is self-revealing (*svayamprakasha*), i.e., it is revealed without help of anything, and it requires only to remove ignorance or *avidya*. As a chair, which is already in a room, is not seen for darkness and seen or revealed when a lamp is brought, so when darkness of ignorance or nescience is removed by the light of right knowledge, the Brahman is revealed in itself. From this it is proved that the Divine Principle is already there in all living beings, and it requires only to remove the nescience or non-knowledge of the Divine Principle.

The Swami has clarified the meaning of the passage 'So God created man in his own image.' The word 'image' does not mean the physical form of man, but it is the ego or soul which is, in essence, the Divinity. There is an allusion, in the *Upanishad*, of '*dva suparna*', i.e., two birds in the cage of the heart, the one is the eternal, absolute, real, perfect and self-effulgent, and the other is its reflection or shadow. Vedanta says that Divine Principle is one and universal, but its reflections or images are many. In the *Upanishad*, we again find that two birds, which dwell upon the tree of life, are bound together by the tie of love and friendship. The one sits calm, serene and contented, while the other flies and hops from branch to branch and tastes sweet and sour fruits. The second bird is gradually disgusted after tasting good and bad fruits, and at last he comes nearer to the first bird, his witness like friend, and comes to know the state of his friend's calmness and serenity. Then he realizes his fault and ignorance and gives up ignorance about his Divine Principle or real essence and becomes free from all bondages. The book, *Divine Heritage of Man*, therefore, teaches to remove the bondage of ignorance and to recognize one's own essence, the immortal heritage, the *Atman*.

## CHAPTER IX

### HUMAN AFFECTION AND DIVINE LOVE

Love or manifestation of love can be divided into two, phenomenal and transcendental—material and spiritual—human and divine. Worldly affection is material, whereas other-worldly affection is spiritual and is known as Divine Love, or love for God. All human affections and attractions are but the manifestation of that wonderful power of love. It is the one power that governs our life and the lives of all living beings. Even the inanimate material objects are possessed of power of attraction, because if there was no power of attraction in them, then the atoms and molecules of the material objects which compose the forms of them were not found tied together into the mass solid objects. The solid material objects have in them the power of resistance. In the Sankhya philosophy, we find that evolution of this phenomenal universe depends upon attraction (*raga*) of the qualities of *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*, and destruction happens for repulsion (*viraga*) of them.

Phenomenal love is an attraction or attachment to material body, senses, and sense-pleasures. This kind of love is very limited and selfish, because it knows nothing except the petty self, and forgets the love for the higher Self, which is the *Atman*. Love for God is other worldly and divine. Love for God makes one forget his petty self which is attached to the material body and senses.

The nature of love is to attract. Wherever there is an expression of love, there is manifested a kind of mutual attraction first, and then comes the mutual attachment and mutual feeling of possession. Or it can be said that love is the attraction between a soul and a soul. Here the word 'soul' signifies both petty self (*jivatman*) which is attached to material body and Self or *Atman* which transcends the attractions or attachments of all material sense objects. The *Bṛihadaranyaka Upanishad* says that a mother loves her child neither for the child's sake, nor for its material form, but for the sake of the soul, the *Atman*, that a wife loves her husband not for the

husband's material form, but for the sake of the *Atman* which shines in the husband 'आत्मनस्तु कामाय पति प्रिय भवति' etc. So that love is known as Divine love when it is directed towards God or the *Atman*. Ordinary human affection seeks a return of love, but Divine love seeks no return. As for example, SRI Radha loved SRI Krishna for love for love's sake, and her love did not ask any return. This asking is known as a craving which is attached to selfish motive, and that craving of the soul will not be absolutely satisfied until the eternal object, or ideal of love, is discovered. That eternal object is God, or God the Absolute.

The human or earthly love brings with it sorrow and suffering, whereas Divine love brings a cessation of all sorrow, suffering and pain. Divine love 'lifts the soul above all bondages, breaks the fetters of selfish attachment and worldliness. The human love brings peace and happiness which are temporary and non-eternal, whereas Divine love brings permanent peace and eternal happiness.' In fact, Divine love brings non-attachment to sense pleasures and directs the mind towards God, the eternal peace. 'Whosoever has ever tasted one single drop of that soul-stirring Divine love, has gained infinite strength and unlimited power which is able to conquer the whole world within the twinkling of an eye. His body may be killed or crucified but he lives as immortal one as the Lord Himself."

*INDIA AND HER PEOPLE*

In the Western countries, Swami Abhedananda was widely known as a great scholar, a popular teacher, an accredited teacher of Vedanta, and an author of international reputation. The Swami was, in fact, the most formidable champion of Indian culture and civilization and a true patriot whose heart was always with India. He started the movement of Indian struggle for freedom in 1905 and himself fought for India and her people in spite of hundreds and thousands of vehement opposition, bitter criticism, racial prejudice and sectarian jealousy. His fame as a scholar, a philosopher, and an eloquent speaker spread so rapidly that many a time Swami Abhedananda was invited to speak before Universities, Societies, Clubs, Churches, Synagogues and many cultural and religious Institutions and associations and everywhere the people listened to him with rapt attention and great delight, and his lectures on different subjects received much respect and appreciation in America. In 1905-1906 at the invitation of Franklin W. Hooper, Director of the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences, the Swami delivered a series of lectures before large gatherings on philosophy, religion, society, government, education and culture of India. The Swami also challenged many of the Christian missionaries and contradicted their scathing and sweeping remarks on the religious and social conditions of the Hindus and silenced their voices by his clear and forceful arguments. Really the Americans, nay, the Western nations, for the first time, came to know the real conditions of India from a native of the soil who keenly felt the wrongs and sufferings of his own people, and many had to revise their general opinions and impressions as the subjects. Mr Hooper remarked on April 26, 1906, on the lectures by Swami Abhedananda: "These lectures constitute an exceedingly valuable description of the social, political, educational, and religious conditions of India. They contain precisely what the American wants to know about India. Delivered, as they were by a

native of India, they are not coloured by foreign prejudices. I am impressed, by what I heard of the lectures with the fact that in the hurry and bustle of our Western civilization, we have a great deal to learn from the East.

The lectures were given in subject-wise, and the subjects of discussion were

- I The Prevailing Philosophy of Today,
- II The Religion of India Today,
- III The Social Status of the Indian People Their system of Caste,
- IV Political Institutions of India,
- V Education in India,
- VI The Influence of India on Western Civilization and the Influence of Western Civilization on India

The Swami says in the preface of the first edition of the book *India and Her People* in May 15, 1906 "The first six lectures contained in the volume were delivered before the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences. As my limited time did not permit me to describe at length the status of Hindu women, I have added a separate lecture on *Women's Place in Hindu Religion* to complete the subject. My main object has been to give an impartial account of the facts from the standpoint of an unbiased historian and to remove all misunderstandings which prevail among the Americans concerning India and her people."

The first lecture was on 'Prevailing Philosophy of India'. From history we know that the philosophical ideas of India were known to all the ancient savants of the world. The Greek philosophers like Permenides, Heraclitus, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Proclus, Pythagoras, and others, mystics like Plotinus, Echart, and others, the German and English philosophers like Berkeley, Hume, Kant, Schelling, Fichte, Schopenhauer, Hartman, John Stuart Mill, Herbert Spencer, Waldo Emerson, and others, the scientists like Huxley, John Fiske, Voltaire, Thompson, and others, and the poets like Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats, Byron, Tennyson, and others—all were mostly influenced by the sublime thoughts and ideas of the *Upanishads* of India. Even the Sufi mystics of Arabia and Persia were influenced by and other civilized countries of the world, made possible for spread of ideas of one country to other countries, and the Swami

has given sufficient historical facts and evidence of them in the sixth chapter of this book

In the first chapter, the Swami says that in the remote antiquity, the dawn of civilization broke first upon the horizon of India "The ancient Vedic sages had already perfected their lofty system of moral philosophy and their followers were well-established in the practice of the ethical and spiritual teachings of the Vedas even before Moses \* \* And while thinkers among the Semitic Tribes were still trying to explain the origin of the human race and of the universe through the mythological stories of creation collected from the Chaldeans, Phoenicians, Babylonians, and Persians, the Aryan philosophers of India had already discovered the evolution of the universe out of one eternal Energy and of man from the lower animals"

Swami Abhedananda writes that as early as the Vedic period, which dates from 5000 to 2000 B C, the ancient Seers of Truth asked the most vital question and discussed problems that troubled the minds of the great philosophers of all ages, and in trying to answer the burning questions and to solve the acute problems of life and death and of similar nature, the ancient thinkers discovered the laws of thought and traced the causes of phenomena, applying the rules of logic and reason at every step, and this was the beginning of philosophy in India

In ancient India, in the Vedic period, we find the collection of the four Vedas and the *Samhitas*, the *Brahmanas* and many other Vedic literature evolved those Vedas. The *Upanishads* are the extracts of those Vedas and are recognized as the knowledge or intuitional portion of them. The *Upanishads* are so called because whoever comes in contact with the sublime thoughts or teachings of the *Upanishads*, he is illumined with Divine knowledge of the *Atman*, that dispells the darkness of delusion (*ajnana* or *maya*). There are many *Upanishads* and eleven among them are principal, on which Acharva Sankara and others wrote commentaries. The *Upanishads* like *Isha*, *Kena*, *Katha*, *Mundaka*, *Mandakya*, *Taittiriya*, *Aitareya*, *Prasna*, *Kaushitaki*, *Chhandogya*, and *Brihadaranyaka* teach that extinction of the fire of passions and desires are necessary as they are the cause of the worldly ties, and cares



and anxieties. They say that Brahman or *Atman*, is the only real and attainable, and all other things of the world are changeful, contingent and fleeting, so they should be shunned with the help of the power of discrimination and the Brahman, or *Atman*, should be concentrated and meditated upon for permanent tranquility and peace.

Swami Abhedananda says that the seekers of absolute Truth in ancient India made their possible attempts to discover the Truth, and solved the mysteries of the phenomenal world, and their attempts gave birth to six systems of speculative philosophy, which are known as Vaisheshika, Nyaya, Sankhya, Yoga, Purva-Mimamsa, and Uttara Mimamsa or Vedanta. The Vaisheshika system was promulgated by Kanada. His great discovery was the categories (*padartha*), which are substance (*dravya*), quality (*guna*), action (*karma*), genus (*samanya*), species (*vishesha*), and coherence (*samavaya*). Each of these categories are again subdivided into various classes like time, space, self, mind, etc.

According to Kanada, atom (*anu*) is indivisible, invisible, constant, and imperishable, and aggregate of these atoms gave birth to molecule (*dyanu*) which is also invisible. Again the aggregate of three molecules or *dyanus* gave birth to triad (*trasarenu*) which formed the matrix of the world-appearance, aided by the will of God. The Swami says "How remarkable it is to see that the conception of atoms and molecules arose in India centuries before the time of Empedocles and Democritus. And the latest atomic theory of European science has not in any way surpassed that of ancient India."

Next to the Vaisheshika is the Nyaya philosophy of Gautama or Akshapada who added ten more categories (*padartha*) in the six categories of Kanada. Gautama said that the objects of knowledge are twelve which are *Atman*, body, sense, organs, etc. Gautama is called the Aristotle of India, as he is the founder of Hindu logic, which contains the right methods of reasoning and correct construction of true syllogism. In the book, *Civilization in Ancient India* (Vol I), Mr. R. C. Dutt said "The Hindus invented logic, the Greeks perfected it."

After Nyaya, Kapila devised the system of the Sankhya in about 700 B.C. Kapila is called the father of the evolution theory (*abhivyaktivada* or *kramavikashavada*) in India, and

his theory was so methodical, scientific and perfect that all other systems of Indian philosophy including Vedānta adopted it. Kapila devised two prime principles, *Purusha* and *Prakṛiti*, of which *Purusha* is intelligent, sentient and devoid of all changes and *Prakṛiti* is insentient (*jada*) and depended upon the *Purusha* and the evolution began and world appearance came into being when the insentient *Prakṛiti* came in contact with the sentient *Purusha*. It has already been said that most of the Greek philosophers were influenced by the Indian philosophical thoughts and Professor Hopkins supporting this fact said 'Plato is full of Sāṅkhyan thought worked out by him, and it was taken by the Pythagoras.' Further he wrote 'Neo-Platonism and Christian Gnosticism owe much to India. However, Kapila was a *sāṅkaryavādī* and said that everything comes out of something, and the cause lies in the effect, and destruction means the reversion of an effect to the causal state. But Kapila denied the existence of God, the Creator, as he believed that creation or evolution happens with the mere contact between the *Purusha* and the *Prakṛiti*.'

Next Patañjali modified to some extent the philosophical thought of Kapila and admitted for many reasons the existence of God "*puruṣa-viśeṣaḥ īśvaraḥ*". Swami Abhedananda says 'Like Kapila, Patañjali believes in the existence of countless *Purushas* or individual souls, each of which is by nature eternal, infinite and immortal. But this system differs from Sāṅkhya by admitting the existence of a cosmic *Purusha* (personal God)'.

Patañjali laid stress on *abhyāsa* and *vaśāgya*, i.e., continual striving and detachment, and said that these two things prepare the ground of concentration and meditation (*dharāna* and *dhyāna*). Meditation prepares the ground of *asamprajñāta-samādhi* which is the state of eternal tranquility and bliss.

Then evolves, says the Swami, the *Purva-Mīmāṃsā* of Jaimini. There are different opinions as to the real meaning of the word '*purva*', Swami Abhedananda says that *Mīmāṃsā* connotes the idea of investigation and the word '*purva*' means former or prior and that means *Purva-Mīmāṃsā* examines various injunctions of the ritualistic portion of the Vedas (*karmakāṇḍa*), and points out that the highest duty of man is to follow those injunctions as strictly as possible, and they

at last lead us to the direct revelation of the Absolute. Really the Pūṣya-Mīmāṃsā prepares the ground of the Uttara Mīmāṃsā, which is known as Vedānta—the *anta* or the end of duty and of daily works, sacrificial, ritualistic and devotional and said that an unseen power *apurva* is created as a result of the sacrificial works, and that power will help the sacrificer to go to heaven (*svarga*) and to live there for indefinite period. But Śrī Kṛṣṇa said in the *Bhagavad Gītā* ‘*abrahma-bhūvanamloke purnaravartimorjuna*’, i.e., even those who go to the celestial regions, will come again to this world of desires after expiring their periods of living in that upper region. So it is understood that even the heavens (*svargas*) are not eternal and not the highest achievement of human life.

Then comes the Uttara-Mīmāṃsā and it taught that eternal peace is achieved only through detachment from the worldly passions and desires. Gautama Buddha also taught this lesson that Nivāna, the positive state of perfect peace and tranquillity, comes with the complete extinction of the burning fire of desires. Bādarāyaṇa, Gaudapāda, Govindapāda, Śrī Saṅkar and others realized in their life the perfect Brahma-Nivāna and preached that nescience or *māyā* brings forgetfulness in the life of men and thus binds them in the worldly chain, and when men come to know the state of their ignorance they take the help of discrimination (*vichara*) and thus dispel the darkness of ignorance and realize themselves as the eternal, blissful Brahman.

Swami Abhedananda says that one system of Uttara-Mīmāṃsā or “Vedānta is more critical than the Kantian system, because it shows the phenomenal nature of the Kantian ego, of his forms of intuition and his categories of thought. It (Vedānta) is more sublime than the philosophy of Kant, because it recognizes and proves the identity of the objective reality of the universe with the subjective reality of the ego.” In this connection, the Swami has discussed about the nature of true philosophy which in the widest sense, performs three great functions. Firstly, it co-ordinates the ultimate results arrived at by special branches of knowledge which we call sciences, and, taking up those conclusions, it must form the widest generalizations possible.” Secondly,

the true philosophy must investigate the realm of knowledge and trace its source. A philosophy which does this, is called Epistemology which is theory and analysis of knowledge and deals with things and beings, and also deals with things going beyond bare experience. Thirdly, true philosophy leads our mind into the realm of the absolute Brahman. The Swami says, 'No philosophy in the world performs these three functions so satisfactorily as Vedanta. Hence we may say that Vedanta is the most complete of all systems.'

Again in connection with it, Swami Abhedananda has pointed out as to who is a true philosopher. The Swami says, 'In India a true philosopher is not a mere speculator, but a spiritual man. He does not believe in certain theories which cannot be carried into practice into everyday life, what he believes, he lives, and, therefore, practical philosophy is still to be found in India.'

The second chapter deals with *The Religion of India Today*. Philosophy and religion go hand-in-hand, and one is the counterpart of the other, so Swami Abhedananda has discussed in this book religion of India along with the prevailing philosophy of India. The Swami says that India is a country with a vast conglomeration of nations and languages, and among this huge mass of inhabitants there live followers of all religious faiths and creeds. And to make the number of adherent of different faiths in India, the Swami has given a report of the Census of 1901, which in 1970 the numbers have immensely been raised.

The majority of the population of India, says Swami Abhedananda, are known as Hindus and their religion is Hinduism. But what do we mean by the word 'Hinduism'? The Swami says, 'The words 'Hindu' and 'Hinduism', however, are entirely of foreign origin.' The word 'Hindu' refers to the descendants of the Indo-Aryans whose religion is *Aryadharma*, *Sanatamadharma* or eastern religion. Hinduism is a system of religion which embraces all religious thoughts of the world. "It stands like a huge banyan tree, spreading its far-reaching branches over hundreds of sects, creeds and denominations, and covering with its innumerable leaves of all forms of worship—the dualistic, qualified non-dualistic, and

monistic worship of the one supreme God, the worship of the Incarnation of God, and also hero-worship, saint-worship, symbol-worship, ancestor-worship, and the worship of departed spirits. It is based upon the grand idea of universal receptivity. It receives everything." Therefore, the Hinduism or religion of the Hindus is all-embracing universal religion, which has no quarrel with any other religions.

Swami Abhedananda has classified the religion of the Indo-Aryans under three heads, dualistic, qualified non-dualistic and monistic, and has depicted the religious faiths and manners of the Vaishnavas, Saivas, Saktas, Ganapatyas, Sauryas, and other religious sects. Here he has given the accounts of Sri Ramachandra, Sri Krishna and Vishnu. Besides, he has represented the accounts of Guru Nanaka, Mohammed and other religious teachers of the Jains, the Buddhists and the Christians.

The third chapter deals with 'The Social Status of the Indian People their System of Caste'. Swami Abhedananda says that the Hindu people are extremely conservative in their manners and customs. It should be remembered that India was invaded by host of foreign nations like the Greeks, the Scythians, Mongolians, Tartars, Mohammedans, and by the Portuguese, Dutch and other Christians. The Egyptians, Persians and other nations were unable to conserve themselves, but the Hindus possessed comparatively the power of conservatism, for which they preserved their traditional customs and faiths from Vedic time down to this present age.

The Swami says that Hindu society is divided into hundreds of communities and each community consists of several clans and each clan or *kula* has its own peculiar customs and rules. This clan family is called *gotra*, which means the descendants of common ancestors. Again the community of many class is called *Jati* (Greek—*genus*, Romans, *geus*). Each family observes some social laws which are known as *jati-dharma*. There are also *kula-dharma* and *gotra-dharma*. The tendency of each community is to preserve the clan family intact and keep the Aryan blood of the individuals in it as pure as possible. The Hindu leaders of the society have discovered some forms of social government, suited for the Hindu people. The Hindu people have divided

themselves into three main classes, aristocracy, middle and lower, which are known as 'castes'. The word 'caste' is the anglicized form of the Portuguese word *casta*, which means 'breed' or stock. The Sanskrit word of caste is *varna* or colour, as for example, the Brahman are possessed of white colour or complexion, the Kshatriyas, of red colour, the Vaishyas, of yellow colour, and the Sudras are of black colour. In or before the time of *Bhagavad Gita*, this colour division was changed and classes were determined according to peoples qualities and duties (*guna-karma-bhagasa*). But gradually everything was changed and there remained no standard of recognition of colour (*varna*) nor quality and duty (*guna* and *karma*). The society is always changeful, and every social rule and custom are bound to change their forms or patterns. Swami Abhedananda has mentioned all these things in a beautiful manner (vide *India and Her People*, 1963, pp 102-103). He has also said about another theory about the origin of caste from the *Mahabharata* (*shantiparva*, chapters 188-189), and has related the conversation between Bharadvaja and Bhrgu, the noted law-makers of the Hindus and has shown some causes for changes from time to time (vide *India and Her People*, 1963, pp 109-108).

About 600 B.C., the Swami says, Buddhism crept in and then later the Mohammedans came in India. The Hindu society gradually lost then flexibility and solidity. Even now the conditions of the society are changing. Today the integrity of the social organization is weakened, and social class and anarchy have prevailed. Directly and indirectly the Christian missionaries tried to destroy the Hindu social structure. However, India needs social reorganization and social regeneration, which must be based upon the broadest and most universal ideals of Vedanta that knows no distinction of caste, creed and colour.

The fourth chapter deals with 'Political Institutions of India'. The Vedic writings tell us that though the Indo-Aryans were mainly agriculturists yet they were the fighting nation who continually fought against the non-Aryan aboriginal tribes. The interminable warring and fighting forced the conquering Aryan tribes to organize their political and military institutions. Though the Indo-Aryans divided

the country into various kingdoms, principalities, yet there was no universal sovereignty over the whole of India. In the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* we come across many kings and emperors, but their bond could break at any time for very insignificant causes.

When Alexander the Great invaded India, there was on the throne the most powerful Buddhist emperor, Chandragupta. However, Alexander was defeated and his successor, Seleucus, sent the Greek ambassador Megasthenes who lived for several years at the court of Chandragupta. From the valuable records of Megasthenes, we come to know the political situation of India of the Gupta Age. Megasthenes related the military and social laws of the Hindus, as prescribed by Manu, Apastamba, Vaishishtha, Bodhyayana, and others. From the *Manu-samhita*, we also come to know the duties of the king (vide Manu, VII 12, 16, 50, 54-53, 115-123, 146-147, 221-225), the situation of law and government, etc. The Chinese travellers, F Hien (about 400 A.D.) and Huen-Tsang (about 630 A.D.) have also given the graphic descriptions of the political, social, religious and literary works and achievements of India during their stays in India. Megasthenes remarked that the village community was called *Panchayat* and that *Panchayat* system was very strong and every individual member enjoyed absolute political and social freedom and independence. During the Mohammedan rule of six hundred years, all the political institutions of the Hindus remained unaltered. But they were gradually disturbed and destroyed by the *short-sighted policy of the British autocrats* and its place was given to a most costly system of judicial administration.

From the history we know that England conquered India not by force of arms, but by policy. Some English merchants first came to India to trade at the time when the Mohammedan power was in its decline. The East India Company was established and Swami Abhedananda has given some vivid records of revenues, taxes and some possessions of lands from the British House of Commons' Third Report, 1773, and *Economic History of British India*. The Swami says "It is a long story, time will not permit me to describe the *horroring tales of the foul and treacherous methods* which were

adopted by the *unworthy representatives of the English People*, under the name of the East India Company, to secure for their motherland a market-place for her trade and commerce and to bring benefit and prosperity to the British nation, which was at that time the poor nation in Europe. Those who have read the impeachment of Warren Hastings by Burke, as also impartial students of the history of the East India Company, are already acquainted with the *brutal policy of the Company*, \* \*"

From extracts from India Office Records quoted in *Hunter's Annals of Rural Bengal*, 1868, and from the reports of the Indian Famine Commissions of 1880 and 1898, Swami Abhedananda has placed accurate accounts of the terrible famines in India for failure of crops, and heavy loss of lives for famine in different parts of India, and the Swami says that yet the British Government did not exempt the heavy tax which was imposed all over the country. The Swami has quoted the reports of John Gullivan, the then Member of the Government of Madras, and President of the Board of Revenue, and says "They (the people of India) have no voice whatever in imposing the taxes which they are called upon to pay, no voice in framing the laws, which they are bound to obey, no real share in the administration of their own country, and they are denied those rights from the insolent and insulting pretext that they are wanting in mental and moral qualifications for the discharge of such duties." Besides, the Swami reports "No Indian industry of any kind has been encouraged by the British Government during the last one hundred and fifty years." The economic condition of India was therefore, most deplorable. The stream of wealth was ruthlessly drawn from the conquered people of India. The drain from India to England, during the closing twenty-five years of the nineteenth century, was estimated to £500,000,000. The popular belief is that England has sunk her enormous capital in the development of India, but the truth is that England has not spent a cent in governing India." The Swami has drawn a naked picture of the mal-administration of the British Government. The Swami says "Ambitious, unsympathetic young civilians go out to India for a few years to exploit the country, satisfy their greed and



self-interest and return home to live like lords, drawing upon the taxes of the impoverished millions. I will give you an illustration of Lord Curzon, however, openly declared that all Indians were disqualified by reason of their race, and this proclamation was repeated by King Edward VII on the day of his Coronation." "Well has it been said by Mr. Reddy, an English friend of India," quotes Swami Abhedananda, England, through her missionaries, offered the people of India thrones of Gold in another world, but refused them a simple chain in this world."

The fourth chapter deals with "Education in India", i.e., education system of India during the British rule. Swami Abhedananda has divided education in India into four periods. 'The first, the pre-Buddhist or before the sixth century B.C., the second, the Buddhistic period, from 500 B.C. to the tenth century A.D., the third, the Mohammedan, and the fourth, the period under British rule.' The Swami has first described the education system of the Vedic time, when the students lived with the teachers in the *guru-grihas* for twelve years or more. Having returned home from the *guru-grihas*, the students married and settled themselves as householders. Then afterwards at the age of fifty, they left their home and hearth and went to the peaceful places or jungles to live as the *vanapiasthas*, and then if they desired, they took *sannyasa* and past their lives in concentration and meditation for attaining Godconsciousness, the highest achievement of the human life. At a latter period, in 1000 B.C. there arose Brahmanic settlements called *Parishads*, which consisted of not less than 21 Brahmins, well-versed in philosophy, theology and law. In the *Upanishads*, we find the mention of the *Parishads* which were really the collegiate institutions of learning as has been said by Dr. Chamberlain. Six schools of philosophical systems of Kanada, Gautama, Kapila, Patanjali, Kumarila and Vadarayana were already studied in different *Parishads* or universities approximately from 1400 and 600 B.C. Besides, the students were taught Arithmetic, Algebra, Geometry, Trigonometry, Decimal notation, Astronomy, and other subjects. Music that evolved from the Samaveda, was practised by the students and teachers and priests with five to seven Vedic notes with downward movements

*madya*, and *tara*), *murchanas* and aesthetic sentiments and moods (*rasas* and *bhavas*) Then in the classical period, the *gandharva* type of music evolved with the materials of the Vedic music *samagana*, having *jaturagas* and *gramaragas* In the *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata*, and *Harivamsha* and different *Puranas* different kinds of education system are found During the Buddhist period, considerable progress in the system of education was made The medical science, as forwarded by Charaka, and Sushruta, was developed The *Rasayana* or Chemistry was known to the Hindus The Hindus were acquainted with the oxides of copper, iron, lead, tin, zinc and lead Aryabhatta introduced Algebra, Astronomy, and discovered, for the first time, the rotation of the earth on its own axis Varahamihira wrote the *Brihat samhita* and Brahmagupta described in his astronomical system the true places of the planets, the calculation of lunar and solar eclipses, and wrote a treatise on Physics Before him, Aryabhatta discovered the law of *madhyakarshana*, i.e., attraction of the earth towards the centre and correctly calculated the distance of the earth's circumference The fables of the *Panchatantra* and of the *Hutopadesha* created a sensation among the students for getting knowledge of many things through the medium of fables In the Mohammedan period, the progress of education was not so much hampered Special music type of Dhruvapada and Kheyal were enriched and they were introduced to all classes of people But Swami Abhedananda says that during the Mohammedan occupation which began in the eleventh century A.D. and continued for nearly six hundred years, the Hindus made very little progress in scientific education However, elementary schools were started during this time of Mohammedan rule for the study of the Persian and Arabic languages Euclid and Ptolemy's Astronomy and other branches of natural philosophy were also taught in the high school for the Mohammedans at the time when British rule began in India, about the middle of the eighteenth century

"In 1813," the Swami says, "the British Parliament, for the first time offered the sum of £10,000 from the revenue of India, to be appropriated for the education of the people of the three provinces of Bengal, Bombay and Madras Nothing,

however, was done for ten years until 1823. Ram Mohan Roy was the first man among Hindus who learned English thoroughly by his private exertions. He consulted with David Hare and planned to open an English seminary. The project started in 1815 and 1817, and Raja established a school at Calcutta, which is known today as the Hare School. In 1820, the Government of India started an enquiry to find out the indigenous method of education among the Hindus in the Presidencies of Madras, Bombay, and Bengal. Between 1823 and 1833, *no special thing was done in the educational line*. In 1835, Lord Bentinck, appointed a committee of Public Instructions, and Sir Raja Radha Kanta Dev Bahadur and Rasamoy Dutt of Calcutta were included in that committee. Resolutions were made for promoting education among the Indians. In 1830, Alexander Duff arrived in Calcutta as the missionary of the General Assembly of the Scotch Kirk. He converted at least forty young Hindus, but he left this policy of conversion which created an obstruction in the path of spreading education among the Hindus. Gradually through the efforts of Iswara Chandra Vidyasagar, Lord Hardinge and others, some schools and colleges were established for imparting English education. In 1836, the Hooghly College was opened and in 1843, more than fifty-one schools and colleges were established. The missionary schools were mostly elementary or primary. However, the East India Company's charter was renewed in 1833 and many of the schemes and policies were, therefore, changed. During Lord Canning's time, in 1854, three universities were established after the model of London University. Two more universities were added since—one in the Punjab in 1822, and the other in Allahabad in 1887. The Government did not give free education in India although the Hindus paid all kinds of taxes. Female education received no support from the Government. However, the first Girls' school was established in Calcutta by Mr. Drinkwater Bethune.

The Swami says that today the Hindus have shown to the world that intellectually they are equal to the most intellectual people of Europe and America, but the British Government did not pay any attention to their ability. "The Hindus are eager to learn, and they are indebted to England for

introducing Western education in India. If England has done any good to India, it is by the introduction of English education.' Now, in the middle of the twentieth century, India is free from the role of the British Government and everything has been changed in scheme and educational policy.

The sixth chapter deals with 'The Influence of India on Western Civilization, and the Influence of Western Civilization on India'. Swami Abhedananda says 'The dawn of Aryan civilization broke for the first time on the horizon, not of Greece or Rome, not of Arabia or Persia, but of India, which may be called the motherland of metaphysics, philosophy, logic, astronomy, science, art, music, and medicine, as well as of truly ethical religion'. In fact, between the years 1500 and 500 B.C., the Hindus were so far advanced in religion, metaphysics, philosophy, science, art, music, and medicine that no other nation could stand as their rival. On the contrary, many of the nations which came in contact with the Hindus through trade or otherwise, accepted the Hindu ideas and moulded their own after the Hindu pattern. The Swami says that as the Western world owes great debt to India, India is also indebted to the Western world for many things and both the worlds, Eastern and Western came in close contact through the relations of trade and commerce and religious missions. Many oriental scholars are of the opinion that most of the Greek thinkers like Thales, Parmenides, and philosophers of the Eleatic School, Anaximander and Heraclitus were indebted to the sublime doctrines of the *Upanishads* and Vedanta. Professor Garbe has said 'Plotinus was in perfect agreement with the Hindu philosophers and that his disciple Porphyry knew of the Yoga doctrine of union with the Deity'. \* \* Through Plato and his followers, the Neo-Platonists, stoics and Philo of Alexandria were also influenced by the Hindu philosophy. The Buddhist missionaries were sent by the Emperor Asoka to different parts of the world, from Siberia to Ceylon, from China to Egypt. The Buddhist missionaries preached the sublime ethics of Buddha in Syria, Palestine and Alexandria. The religious sect of the Essenes arose through the influence of the Buddhist missionaries who went to the Christian world from India. The baptism of water was also introduced among the Essenes by the Buddhist

missionaries, having originated in India. The Buddhist missionaries and preachers also influenced the faith of the Gnostics and introduced the idea of reincarnation among them.

From the history we also know that Japan is indebted to India for her religion. Buddhism was introduced to Japan in the sixth century A.D., and Shintoism and Confucianism lie in harmony with Buddhism. In 65 A.D., Buddhism was introduced to China, and Taoism is in harmonization with the Buddhism.

Swami Abhedananda has criticized the European civilization that has given to India the standard of commercialism and brought extreme selfishness among the people of India. But he says that Western civilization under British rule has opened the eyes of the masses and has made them realize that a foreign government is no better than a curse of God upon a nation. Now, this lecture was delivered by Swami Abhedananda in 1905-1906, when India was in bondage, but now she is free from that foreign influence and has got ample opportunity to make herself free and happy in all respect.

The seventh chapter deals with 'Women's Place in Hindu Religion'. This chapter was added by the Swami after he delivered these six lectures in the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences, USA. In this lecture, the Swami has proved that women are the living embodiment of Divine Sakti and so until and unless their status is raised in high, so long the Indian society will not enjoy real freedom and happiness. In the Rig Veda (V 61.8), Sayana has stated "The wife and husband, being the equal halves of one substance, are equal in every respect, therefore, both should join and take equal parts in all work, religious and secular." The Swami has placed forward the examples of ideal of the past, like Lopamudra, Romasa, Visvavara, Shashvati, Gargi, Maitreyi, Apala, Ghose, and Aditi. In the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* and other Epics, we find the examples of many ideal women. The glorious character of the Rani of Jhansi, and the sacrificing character of Ahalya Bai are worth mentioning. The Biblical conception of womanhood is really degenerating, though the European society has afterwards rectified their position and altitude and shows respect and regard for the women.

Swami Abhedananda has quoted many *ślohas* and passages from both the works of Manu and Mrs F A Steele and has shown that the ancient Indian society had great respect for women. The Christian missionaries have laid blame upon the Hindu society for many fabulous and horrible customs, attached with the womanhood of India, but, in truth, they brought all the time false charges against the moral character of the Hindu women. The Christian missionaries show the example of self burning of the Hindu widow, but, in reality, that brutal custom is not sanctioned by any Vedic literature. 'Those who have read the life of Buddha', says Swami Abhedananda, "know that his wife became the leader of the Buddhist nuns. There are today hundreds of Hindu Sannyasins (nuns) who are recognized as spiritual teachers by the Hindus. The wife of Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Sarada Devi, has become a living example of the great honour and reverence that are paid by Hindus to a woman of pure, spotless, spiritual life. Lastly, the Swami says that the position of woman can be understood better by the unique idea of the Motherhood of God. Sri Ramakrishna regarded every woman as the living embodiment of Adyasakti, and it is our duty to follow Sri Ramakrishna, so as to elevate and animate the Indian society.

In this book, two appendices have been added by the editor of the book and those appendices are (1) 'Prehistoric Indus Civilization', and (2) 'Indian Art in all its Phases'. It has been concluded in those appendices that (1) from the available date of prehistoric Indus culture it is possible to form an idea of the civilization and culture of the prehistoric Indian people, as prevailed in 6000-5000 B C, and (2) the progress and development of Indian art in all its phases show the high culture and refinement the ancient Indians attained.

## CHAPTER XI

### IDEAL OF EDUCATION

*Ideal of Education* contains four lectures delivered on different occasions in different times. The first lecture was delivered under the auspices of the Behai Youngmen's Institute at Patna in 1925, under the presidency of the then Minister of Education. The second lecture was delivered in 1986 at Kuala Lumpur on the Swami's first return from the West. The third lecture was delivered in Madras in 1906, and was published in the book, *Lectures in India*. The fourth or last lecture was delivered by the Swami at the 'Educational Conference' in America as an amendment for the proposal of Dr. William H. Jackson, the Professor of Columbia University, U.S.A.

In the first lecture, regarding education, Swami Abhedananda has said that India has contributed her culture to the Western world, nay, to the whole world, in various branches of knowledge. The world owes its first lessons in Geometry and Algebra to India. The propositions of Euclid were known in India centuries before the Greek philosopher Pythagoras was born, and they were mentioned in the *Sulva-sutras* in the Vedic age. Hippocrates, the father of modern medicine of Europe, who lived about 400 B.C., borrowed his *Materia Medica* from India. The Hindus of the ancient times excelled other nations in Chemistry and in Surgery. Megasthenes said that Alexander the Great used to keep Hindu physicians in his camp. The Arabs learnt Geometry, Algebra, Trigonometry, and other subjects from India. The Greeks had five musical notes and three octaves, but history says that they borrowed them from India. Wagner's music with its special motifs was indebted to Indian music. It is said that Wagner studied the Latin translation of the Sanskrit science of music of India. Sir M. M. Williams has mentioned all these facts in his monumental book, *Brahminism and Hinduism*. 'We had our Newton in Aryabhatta who lived about 476 A.D. and declared that the earth was moving upon its own axis round the sun. The Law of Gravitation (*madhyakarshana*) was first discovered by Aryabhatta. We had our

Shakespeare in Kalidas We had our philosopher Sankar-acharaya who was greater than Kant and Hegel We had the thinkers like Kapila, Gautama, Kanada and Jaimini, who excelled Hume and Berkeley in many respects The whole world is indebted to Kapila and Kanada for their scientific doctrine of evolution, and that of atoms (*anu*) and final particles (*tanmatras*)”

The education of a nation depends upon its ideal of culture and civilization India regards practical spiritual knowledge as the highest one than intellectual knowledge or mere book-knowledge The ancient Hindus of India believed that education brings perfection in man and imparts the spiritual ideal that makes them realize that each individual soul is potentially divine, that it possesses infinite potentiality and come from outside Education gives us suggestions and helps us to unfold the mystery of knowledge

Real education supplies us the real essentials of all religions, and those essentials are self-control, purity, and God-realization Purity of mind or heart is the *sine qua non* of God-vision So we should know the method of attaining the purity through education It should be remembered that true kind of education elevates a man, and animates his spirit to go beyond selfishness and to enter into the unselfish universal ideal of Godhood

Proper education includes moral training The morality brings spirituality which is the expression of oneness in thought and spirit It should be remembered that not only physically, mentally, and intellectually, but also spiritually we are one, because there is only one Spirit in the universe, and this secret is known through proper kind of education

In the second lecture, Swami Abhedananda deals with practical education The Swami says that letters are the vehicles of ideas, and when we study a book, our mind absorbs the thoughts of the writer of the book Thoughts are *suggestions* which help us to think in that line in which the writer of the book thought Again “books help us to acquire suggestions which are like pebbles thrown into a pool They create ripples and react, So when a suggestion is thrown into a child’s mind, it begins to react and in that reaction



the child gathers what is called knowledge. All knowledge comes from within, and all knowledge is already buried within us, and education helps to manifest knowledge in gross form."

What is the highest ideal of practical education? The highest ideal of practical education is to know who we are, what we are, why we have come to this world, why we go, and where we go after death. These questions (*jñanas*) appear when the mind is purified by the light of education, i.e., practical education. The phenomenal knowledge acquired by ordinary education, is known as *aparā-vidyā*, and when education imparts the real spiritual knowledge, that knowledge is known as *parā-vidyā* which arouses the divine desire of *mukti* or absolute freedom from the bondage of delusion or *samsara*. The highest ideal of all kinds of education is the attainment of Godconsciousness, which brings supreme happiness, eternal bliss, and everlasting divine life.

In the third lecture, Swami Abhedananda deals with female education. The Swami says that women should be given proper education, because they are the living embodiments of Divine Energy or *Prakriti*. Sri Ramakrishna Parmahansa realized that every woman, whether young or old, is the representative of the Divine Mother or the Mother of the universe or *jagannātā*. His first *Guru* was a Brahmin lady, whose name was Bhairavi Jogeswari, and taking her as *Guru* he raised every woman of the world to a position of Divinity. The Swami appeals to every parent to send their young girls to the schools and colleges, so that they can take proper education. The proper education restores consciousness and makes that consciousness Divine consciousness. So when the girls are given proper education, they become our ideal mothers. The present society has produced hundreds and thousands of educated women who have taken leading parts in every field, cultural, educational, intellectual and spiritual.

The fourth or last lecture deals with an *Address* which was given to the Educational Conference in America, as a reply to Dr Jackson's lecture. Dr Jackson discussed some salient features of the principles of Eastern and Western education which were the backbone of civilizations of both the great countries. Dr Jackson pointed out that the governing principle of Western civilization was the doctrine of *right*,

and Swami Abhedananda had said in reply that the word *right* implies certain definite thing, e.g., *right* implies a law to exercise our right, or to assert our right. Right also implies efficiency, individuality, and all the cardinal and the intellectual. We find a word *kartavyam*, i.e., what you owe to yourself, to your society, to your community, to your own people, to your country, and to the world at large, is possessed of wider sense or conception than the word *duty* in English language. The words *duty* and *right* convey some different meanings. 'When you regard *right*, you are thinking of what others owe to you, when you think of *duty*, you are thinking of what you owe to others. In the first case, you are rightly committing trespass of these on your side. It may be that you are performing your duty for your ownself, but duty always deals with the contemplation of attitude or interest of the other fellows. Therefore, most of the conflicts that we have, are the results of the exaltation of *right* in Western civilization'.

Now, the aim and object of Educational Conference should establish a lesson of co-operation to the greatest nations of the world. People who are so qualified in the various countries so as to describe for the benefit of the rest of the world, should be invited to discuss about the essential characters of their cultural civilizations and their difficulties and also to interpret to the world their histories and programmes they made. From amalgamation and mutual discussions of the problems of education, culture, and civilization, there shall be a bond of love, co-operation, and amity among all the countries of the world, then ideal of education and conferences will be successful.

Education is the backbone of the nations, because through the light of education they can understand or realize their duty towards their ownself as well as towards the people of other countries. Proper education teaches that all men and women of the society are our brothers and sisters, all women are the living embodiment of the Divine Energy or *Adhyāśakti* and men and women form the whole part of the universe. Education brings frustration if it is not properly imparted, and if it is not rightly understood. So it should be treated with care and should be nourished with love and devotion.

## CHAPTER XII

### CHRISTIAN SCIENCE AND VEDANTA

Mrs Mary Baker G Eddy was the founder of Christian Science. The salient features of Christian Science have been depicted in her book, *Science and Health*. Mrs Eddy was mostly influenced by the book, *Song Celestial* which is the English translation of the *Bhagavad Gita* by Sir Edwin Arnold, and also by the English translation of the *Bhagavad Gita* by Charles Wilkins, published in London in 1785, and in New York in 1867. Mrs Eddy quoted certain passages from the English edition of the *Bhagavad Gita*, but unfortunately, for some reason, those passages of the *Gita* were omitted in the 34th edition of the book, *Science and Health*. In the 193rd edition of that book, we find four propositions have been given, and they are recognized as the four main pillars upon which rests the structure of Christian Science. Those propositions are (1) God is all in all, (2) God is good, God is mind, (3) God, spirit being all, nothing is matter, and (4) Life, God, omnipotent God deny death, evil, sin, disease. Among these four propositions, the first one accepts God who is spirit, mind, life, being, omnipotent god and all in all, and the second one denies matter and that which exists besides God. According to Christian Science, God is real and existent, whereas the whole phenomenal world with innumerable appearances do not exist in reality, so they are like a mirage or an illusion, or a dream. These doctrines are similar to those of Vedanta philosophy, but the difference between the doctrines of Christian Science and those of Vedanta lies in the fact that Christian Science does not answer and justify wherefrom and whence comes this illusion and what is the cause of illusion, whereas Vedanta answers them in a reasonable way. If we closely study Mrs Eddy's book, *Science and Health*, we find that Mrs Eddy has incorporated in her book most of the salient features of Vedanta philosophy, but she denied the debt flatly.

Further we find that Mrs. Eddy has admitted that God or

the absolute Reality is one, but she cannot give any answer why the manifold phenomenal universe evolved from one God, whereas Vedanta philosophy forwards two theories, theory of delusion or *maya* (unreality) and theory of evolution (*sristi*) Theory of delusion (*mayavada*) has been refuted by the Vedantists on the ground that delusion or *maya* appears as real, but it changes and shifts its appearance, so it has no transcendental existence (*paramarthika-satta*), but by this it does not mean that delusion or *maya* has no apparent existence (*pratitika* or *vyavaharika satta*) Swami Abhedananda clarifies this point very beautifully when he says " \* \* it (Vedanta) is most careful to define the terms unreal and illusion By these words Vedanta philosophy does not mean *negation*, but mean phenomenal or relative existence, or reality conditioned by time and space It admits that this phenomenal world is unreal from the standpoint of the Absolute or Noumenon, but, at the same time, it (Vedanta) says that it has as much (conditional) reality in it as anything presented to us by the senses can ever have But Christian Science absolutely *negates* the existence of *maya* or phenomenal appearance like the *vyñānavadin* Buddhists landing in subjective idealism, which is quite contrary to Vedanta, as expounded by Sankara and his followers Swami Abhedananda clarifies this point of difference very beautifully when he says "Although Vedanta philosophy agrees with Christian Science in its fundamental principles, yet there is still a great difference \* \* Christian Science, by denying the existence of matter and mortal mind, denies the existence of the phenomenal world and reduces it to nothingness This reminds us of conclusions reached by some of the nihilistic philosophers of India and Europe Hume denied the existence of mind and matter He reduced the whole universe to a bundle of sensations impressions and ideas Some of the Buddhist philosophers in India denied the existence of the universe in the same way \* \* This difficulty does not arise in Vedanta philosophy, because it does not deny the existence of matter, mind, and everything that are on the phenomenal plane"

Vedanta philosophy expounds, says Swami Abhedananda "the whole universe is like an infinite ocean of Reality, which is nameless and formless, and in that ocean waves and bubbles

rise spontaneously and take different names and forms. These waves and bubbles are the objects of the phenomenal universe. \* \* We owe our existence to that ocean (of Reality) like these, and play for a while, then merge into it to reappear in some other form. Such is the conception of Vedanta concerning relation of phenomena to the absolute noumenon, or the unchangeable Truth which underlies all phenomenal names and forms.' Christian Science taking its stand on the Bible, cannot clarify most of its doctrines backed by reason and science. So if we compare the liberal doctrine contained in the Christian Science with those, contained in Vedanta, we find that Christian Science does not see any harmony between the absolute Truth and the scientific truths discovered by so-called mortal mind, but Vedanta, on the contrary, sees perfect harmony underlying all laws and phases of Truth which human minds have discovered. Christian Science is notably uncharitable towards everything not sanctioned by its founder, while Vedanta philosophy declares that truth is universal and cannot be monopolized by any man or woman of any country. Christian Science has laid stress upon the miraculous and exclusive power of healing, manifested by Jesus and has given the reference of Esculapius, the Greek thinker, Eusebius, the ecclesiastical historian, Appollonius of Tyana, a contemporary of Jesus of Nazareth. The miraculous healing powers or *vibhutes* are also found in the Hindu and Buddhist Yogis of India, but Vedanta philosophy has not given any indulgence upon the application of those powers, as it recognizes those powers as an obstacle to real spirituality or God-realization.

Christian Science further teaches a religion which rests entirely upon the Bible, whereas Vedanta philosophy establishes the foundation of a universal religion, which does not rest upon any particular book or treatise, and it embraces the teachings of all the Saviours and Prophets of the world.

## CHAPTER XIII

### VEDANTA PHILOSOPHY

The lecture on *Vedanta Philosophy* was delivered in the Philosophical Union, established by Professor Howison, in the University of California, at Berkeley, Prof Howison was the Chairman of the Philosophical Union, and taught philosophy at the said University, from 1884 to 1909. He was a philosopher of note in his day. Announcement columns of the newspapers indicate that the lecture was scheduled for a special meeting of the Philosophical Union, in a lecture room of the Philosophy Building of the University of California at Berkeley, at 8 p.m. on September 6, 1901, Friday, Swami Abhedananda delivered the lecture on the Vedanta philosophy, at the request of Prof Howison. From the comment of the Editor of the *Vedanta and the West* (January-February, 1956) of the 1946 Vedanta Place, Hollywood 28, California, it is known that no report of the lecture itself has been found, since it was on this very day that President William McKinley was assassinated, the newspapers thereafter for some time being mostly given over to the news of this event.

From the personal statement of Swami Abhedananda, we come to know that one afternoon he went to the California University, at Berkeley, to hear Prof Howison's lecture, accompanied with Dr Logans. The subject of the lecture was John Fisk's *Through Nature to God*. The lecture being over, he had a talk on Vedanta with Prof Howison. Prof Howison was very much impressed with the learned discussion of the Swami, and requested him to deliver a lecture on the Vedanta philosophy, in the Philosophical Union of the University of California, at Berkeley. The Swami was pleased to accept his request. So, after a month, he, together with Dr Logans and Dr. Ross, went to the said University, in the evening, on the 6th September, 1901, after finishing their luncheon at the Fraternity Home.

It should be mentioned in this connection that the Philosophical Union at the California University was a unique

creation of Prof Howison. The lectures were arranged in the Union, after every three years, from time to time. The first lecture, so far as it is known, was delivered on the *Conception of God* by Prof Josiah Royce, in the year 1895, and it was published in book form in 1897. In 1885, his book *Religious Aspect of Philosophy* created a sensation. The next lecture, in the Philosophical Union, was delivered on the *Principle of Pragmatism* by Prof William James, in the year 1898. This lecture was given in the central idea of the lecture on *Pragmatism*, delivered by Prof Price, twenty years ago whence Prof James delivered his lecture, in a new and novel way. Prof James' lecture on *Principle of Pragmatism* was also published in a book form. After three years, Swami Abhedananda was invited to deliver his lecture on the *Vedanta Philosophy*, in the said Union, and it was so arranged that he would deliver his lecture at 8 p.m., on Friday, the 6th September, 1901. Prof Howison was in the chair. The Swami delivered his lecture for one hour and a half. After the lecture was over, Swami Abhedananda was warmly congratulated by almost all the noted 400 professors of different Universities, assembled there, and especially by Prof Howison himself.

The lecture so long remained unpublished. But fortunately we found a short pencil note of the lecture, in Swami's own handwriting, in his *Almrah*. It was published in the Pujā Number of our Bengali Monthly, "Visvavani", in the year 1955. It has been mentioned in the note that after the deliverance of the lecture, when he came back to his residence at the Vedanta Society, California, he noted down a summary of the lecture, from his memory, at his leisure hour. And we are glad to inform our readers that in 1956, we got a letter from 1946 Vedanta Place, Hollywood, U.S.A., that the complete lecture of the Swami was in their possession, and they inquired whether any copy of the same lecture was lying with us, in India. On receipt of the letter, we requested them to send the copy of the lecture to us. But they informed us that they would be glad to send it after publishing it in their own journal, the *Vedanta and the West*. The complete lecture was thereafter published in 1956, in the January-February issue of the above journal, and a copy of the same was forwarded to us.

Now, how the lecture delivered in the Philosophical

Union, California University, in 1901, came to their possession, has been reported by the Editor of the journal, *Vedanta and the West*, at page 2 of the said journal thus

"Swami Abhedananda was a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna. He taught in the United States from 1897 to 1921. The manuscript of his lecture on 'Vedanta Philosophy' (pages 11 to 25 of the present issue) was given to *Vedanta and the West* by Ida Ansell, before her death on January 31, 1905, who stated that the corrections found in it, were made by the Swami in his own hand. In so far as can be determined, the lecture has never been published"

After we got the complete lecture, through the courtesy of the *Vedanta and the West*, we also wrote a letter to Mr Clark Kerr, the President of the University of California, for sending a copy of the said lecture, if preserved in the Library, for comparing the text of the lecture. We got the reply from Mr Stanley E McCaffrey, the Vice-President—Executive Assistant, on the 25th March, 1959, with a microfilm of the complete text of the lecture, delivered by Swami Abhedananda, in 1901, in the Philosophical Union of the University of California. The copy of the letter is given below

"THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Clark Kerr,

President

Seal

Berkeley 4, California

Stanley E. McCaffrey,  
Vice-President—Executive Assistant

March 25, 1959

Swami Prajnanananda  
Ramakrishna Vedanta Math  
19B, Raja Rajkrishna Street  
Calcutta-6, India

Dear Swami Prajnanananda

I am pleased to respond on behalf of President Clark Kerr to your letter to him of February 17, 1959 concerning the 1901



lecture of Swami Abhedananda

Enclosed with letter you will find a microfilm of the complete text of the speech

We have all the other material which you desire but, unfortunately, there is some expense involved in making copies. Since we have no budget for this service, the money involved would have to come from your office

If you still wish any of his material despite the expense involved, please advise me and I will be glad to arrange it

I hope the enclosed microfilm will be of use to you

Thank you for your interest in the University

Yours sincerely,  
(Sd) Stanley E. McCaffrey

Enclosure

cc Miss May Dornin

Now, let us offer our thanks to the editor of the *Vedanta and the West*, 1946 Vedanta Place, Hollywood, U S A , for helping us by sending the copy of the lecture, in printed form. We also express our gratitude to the authorities of the University of California, Berkeley, U S A , for helping us by sending the microfilm of the text of the lecture, together with the necessary materials

However, we are giving at the outset, the summary of the lecture as noted down in pencil by the Swami from memory. The summary runs as follows

"Before entering into the subject of my discourse of this evening, allow me to thank Prof. Howison, through whose kindness I have been honoured with this privilege of addressing the talented audience that have assembled here tonight. Vedanta philosophy. I suppose very few of us present here are

I have been requested to give the general doctrines of the familiar with the doctrines of this most ancient system of philosophy which have helped mankind in solving the most intricate problems of life and death, and which have led the truth-seeking minds of all ages and climes to the threshold of

the above of the absolute Reality of universe

A student of Vedanta philosophy, after studying different philosophical systems of ancient Greece and modern Germany, find that the ultimate conclusions of the modern philosophers are like the faint echoes of the thundering expressions of what the ancient Vedic seers of Truth realized, at least 2000 years before the Christian era. The monistic systems of modern evolutionists like Le Conte, Romanes, and Haeckel find their place in the utterances of the Vedic philosophers of ancient India. The first conception of the unity of existence that was ever expressed before the world, is to be found in the Rig Veda, the most ancient scripture of the world *ekam sud vipra vahudha vadanti*

The truth seeking minds of the Vedic philosophers did not stop at their research until they could unify the diverse phenomena of the universe into absolute oneness. After discovering the one ultimate source and goal of the universe they tried to explain through logic and science the process by which the eternal one appears as manifold when looked through the limitations of time, space and causation. In their attempt they discovered the law of evolution which governs the cosmic phenomena. The philosophers who came later, developed from these conclusions differed systems of philosophy of which Sankhya system of Kapila and the Vedanta philosophy stand most important. Kapila is called the father of evolution theory in India. He was the first who gave the most logical and scientific explanation of the process of cosmic evolution. Kapila said that the eternal energy is called *Prakriti*. Prof Huxley admits this fact when he says that the doctrine of evolution was known to the Hindu sages long before Paul of Tarsus was born. Well has it been said by Sir Monier M. Williams that the Hindus were Spinozites before Spinoza was born.

\* \* \* \*

It will be interesting to mention that the theory of special creation out of nothing was refuted by an ancient sage as early as 1500 years before Christ, and he was Kapila, the most scientific philosopher. Kapila said '*katham asatat sad jayate*,—how from a non-entity entity comes out? It is not possible. Existence always exists, it never becomes a non-existence'. So,

it is true that Vedanta philosophy did not teach the theory of special creation, rather it condemns and refutes this absurd theory

\* \* \* \*

The fundamental principle of Vedanta is oneness. There is one Existence, one Life, one Spirit, one Being in the universe. The idea of separateness is unreal, Vedanta does not teach, as some people think, that the phenomenal world is a mere illusion, but it teaches that the underlying reality of the universe is the absolute Being which is one and one without the second—'*ekamevadvituyam*'. What is regarded as falsity or delusion in Vedanta is not the phenomenal, but the attribution of true substantiality or essentiality to the phenomenal without the recognition of the underlying unity. It is generally known as nescience (*ajñāna*) that hides the glory of the absolute Being. The absolute Being is called by various names. It is Brahman in Vedanta. The same absolute Being was called by Plato as the Good. It is the *Substantia* of Spinoza, *Ding-an-Sich* of Kant, the *Unknown* and *Unknowable* of Herbert Spencer. Some call it *Noumenon*, Schopenhauer calls it the *Will*. Emerson calls it *Oversoul*. But Vedanta differs from these systems by unifying the subject and object in Brahman.

The thing-in-itself is a pure assumption of Kant, a superfluity, not in any way justified by Kant's own data. Hence it is that the successors of Kant were forced to reject the Kantian thing-in-itself and set up pure rationalism as opposed transcendentalism. The main defect of the Kantian system is the unnatural separation of the thing-in-itself completely from the plane of experience.

But Vedanta philosophy brings the thing-in-itself within the plane of experience and recognizes it in the conception of entity, *sat* (Existence) which has all other things as attributes or relations. The same Brahman is *sat* from the objective point of view, and *chit* of pure intelligence from the subjective standpoint. It is the infinite source of knowledge, it is the eternal knower of the universe. The same Brahman, when qualified by cosmic self-consciousness, omniscience and omnipotence appears as the ruler of the universe. When qualified by the individual consciousness and imperfect knowledge, it constitutes

the individual soul, and when qualified by total absence of self-consciousness, it forms the object or what we call 'matter'

\*                      \*                      \*                      \*

Thus Vedanta philosophy recognizes three entities in the universe, God, soul and matter. God of Vedanta philosophy is not an extra-cosmic something, but it is the inner and underlying reality of the cosmic world, it forms the background of the world, and it exists both inside and outside of the world. Vedanta philosophy gives also a rational foundation to religion which harmonizes with the modern conclusions of science and philosophy. It teaches that the soul is immortal and divine, and the knowledge of the soul brings emancipation to man. Vedanta philosophy teaches that emancipation of the soul (i.e. individual soul) is freedom from the bondages of selfishness and other imperfections. The ethics of Vedanta philosophy is entirely based upon the attainment to Godconsciousness which means the recognition of oneness of the individual soul with the absolute Brahman.

It has been our long cherished wish to publish this memorable lecture, and we are now presenting it to our readers of the Orient and Occident, in printed form. Though the lecture is short, yet it covers the whole range of the central idea of the Vedanta philosophy of India. In this connection it may be mentioned that, while editing, we have made a few changes possible.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE PHILOSOPHY OF PANCHADASI

#### INTRODUCTION

The philosophical thoughts of *Panchadasi* was delivered at the Christo-Theosophical Society of Bloomsbury Square on the 27th October, 1896. Swami Vivekananda was present on the occasion and was highly pleased at the crown success of his beloved spiritual brother. It is the maiden speech of Swami Abhedananda before the learned Western audience. Below are quoted certain authentic records of this lecture from the *Life of Swami Vivekananda* (Vol. II).

"One of the events which satisfied the Swami Vivekananda immensely, was the success of the maiden speech of the Swami Abhedananda, whom he had designed to speak in his stead at a club in Bloomsbury Square, on October 27. The new monk gave an excellent address on the general character of the Vedanta teaching, and it was noticed that he possessed spiritual fervour and possibilities of making a good speaker. A description of this occasion, written by Mr. Eric Hammond, reads:

"Some disappointment awaited those that had gathered that afternoon. It was announced that Swami did not intend to speak, and Swami Abhedananda would address them instead.

'An overwhelming joy was noticeable in the Swami Vivekananda in his scholar's success. Joy compelled him to put at least some of itself into words that rang with delight unalloyed. It was the joy of a spiritual father over the achievement of a well-beloved son, a successful and brilliant student. The Master was more than content to have effaced himself in order that his Brother's opportunity should be altogether unhindered. The whole impression had in it a glowing beauty quite indescribable. It was as though the Master thought and knew his thought to be true. *'Even if I perish on this plane, my message will be sounded through these dear lips and the world will hear it'* \* \* He (Vivekananda) remarked that this was the

first appearance of his dear Brother and pupil, as an English-speaking lecturer before an English audience, and he pulsed with pure pleasure at the applause that followed the remark "His selflessness throughout the episode burnt itself into one's deepest memory."

The present book is an attempt to throw light upon the Vidyananya's Vivaranana school of Advaita Vedanta. It is the first lecture of Swami Abhedananda before the Western audience and as such the method employed in it is not marked by that peculiar novelty which characterises his later lectures and addresses. Yet the fact is to be noticed that the maiden speech also exhibits remarkable lucidity of expression and directness of appeal.

The philosophy of *Panchadasī* is a unique contribution to the domain of Indian thought. Swami Abhedananda's treatment of the subject is thoroughly subjective. He has revealed here the central idea of *Panchadasī* philosophy faithfully and thereby has sought to awaken an interest of the reader in it. His method is essentially logical rather than historical. The historical background has been furnished for the sake of readers' convenience.

First of all we like to mention here the varying opinions with regard to time and historicity of Vidyananya. It is quite clear that Mum Vidyananya belongs to the Vivarana school of thought and he wrote many learned books on Vedanta, such as *Vivarana-prameya-samgraha*, *Panchadasī*, *Drikdrisya-viveka* and others. But there is a dispute among scholars whether Vidyananya was the self-same person as Sayana, the commentator of the Vedas, or they were totally two different persons. Dr S. N. Dasgupta is of the opinion that Vidyananya, the author of *Panchadasī*, and Sayana, the author of *Sarvadarsana-samgraha* are identically the same. He says in his *A History of Indian Philosophy* (Vol II, p. 215) "Vidyananya is reputed to be the same as Madhava, brother of Sayana, the great Vedic commentator." Dr Dasgupta accredited Vidyananya with the authorship of many more books on philosophy, such as, *Vivaranaprimeya-samgraha*, *Jivanmukti-viveka* and others. He admits "In addition to the *Sarvadarsana-samgraha* Madhava wrote three works on the Sankara Vedanta, viz *Vivaranaprimeya-samgraha*, and *Panchadasī*, and also *Jivanmukti-viveka*."

(Cf H I P, Vol II, p 214) Dr Radhakrishnan is also inclined to identify Vidyaranya with Madhava-Sayana and he says Vidyaranya (fourteenth century), generally identified with Madhava, wrote *Vivaranaprameya-samgraha* as the gloss on Prakasatman's work. While his *Panchadasi* is classic of late Advaita, his *Jivanmukti-viveka* is also of considerable value (Vide *Indian Philosophy*, Vol II, p 551), Pandit Rajendranath Ghose (afterwards Swami Chidghanananda) also admits this view and mentions in his Bengali edition of *Advaitasiddhi* (Vol I) that Vidyaranya was no other person than Madhavacharya who wrote not only the *Panchadasi*, *Sarvadarśana-samgraha* and *Vivaranaprameya samgraha*, but also *Anubhūtiprakāśa*, *Jivanmukti viveka*, the glossary on *Aparokṣanubhūti* and *Madhva Upaṇishads*, the short commentary on *Srautasamhita*, *Āitareya Taittiriya* and *Chhandogya Upaṇishads*. He wrote also *Bṛihadaranyaka-varitikasara*, *Sankara-vijaya*, *Jaiminiyamadhyastika-vistar*, *Madhaviya-dhatu-vṛtti*, *Parasara-madhava* and *Kaṭhmadhava*, etc. But Dr I M P Mahadevan expresses a different view with regard to it thus 'But Vidyaranya, \* \* \* was only an insignificant ascetic who presided over the Sringeri Math from C 1377 to 1386 A.D. The works that are definitely attributed to Vidyaranya are only the *Panchadasi* and the *Vivaranaprameya-samgrahata*' (Vide *The Philosophy of Advaita*, p 2)

As regards the time of Vidyaranya, Dr Mahadevan says that Vidyaranya lived probably in the fourteenth century A.D. and was the preceptor of Harihara I, the emperor of Vijayanagar and Bukka, Swami Abhedananda writes "Madhava was at first the Prime Minister of the King Bukka of Southern India and flourished some four hundred years after Sankaracharya. Afterwards he renounced his ministership, property and worldly position and entered the order of Sannyasin." Mr M A Doriswami Iyengar says in his article on *The Madhava Vidyaranya Theory* (Cf *Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol X) that Vidyaranya was an insignificant ascetic and the president of the Sringeri Math. Mr N Venkataramanayya proves in his *Vijayanagar, Origin of the City and the Empire* (Ch II, p 49) that Madhava and Vidyaranya were not identical. Because 'the identity-theory seems to be more probable than the opposite theory' (Cf *The Philosophy of Advaita*, p 3). So he infers



Swami Abhedananda in London in 1896





Swami Abhedananda



*Standing* Swami Vivekananda, Swami Turiyananda, Swami Abhedananda at Rimenve in 1899 ( America )

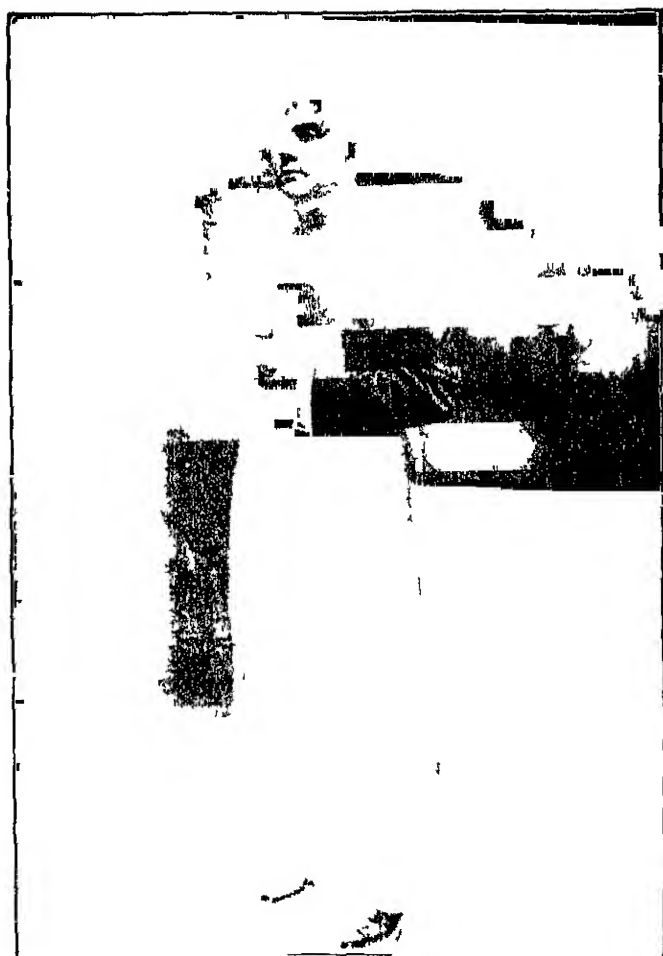


*Standing* , Swami Turiyananda and Swami Abhedananda

*Sitting* Swami Vivekananda and others, at Rigly

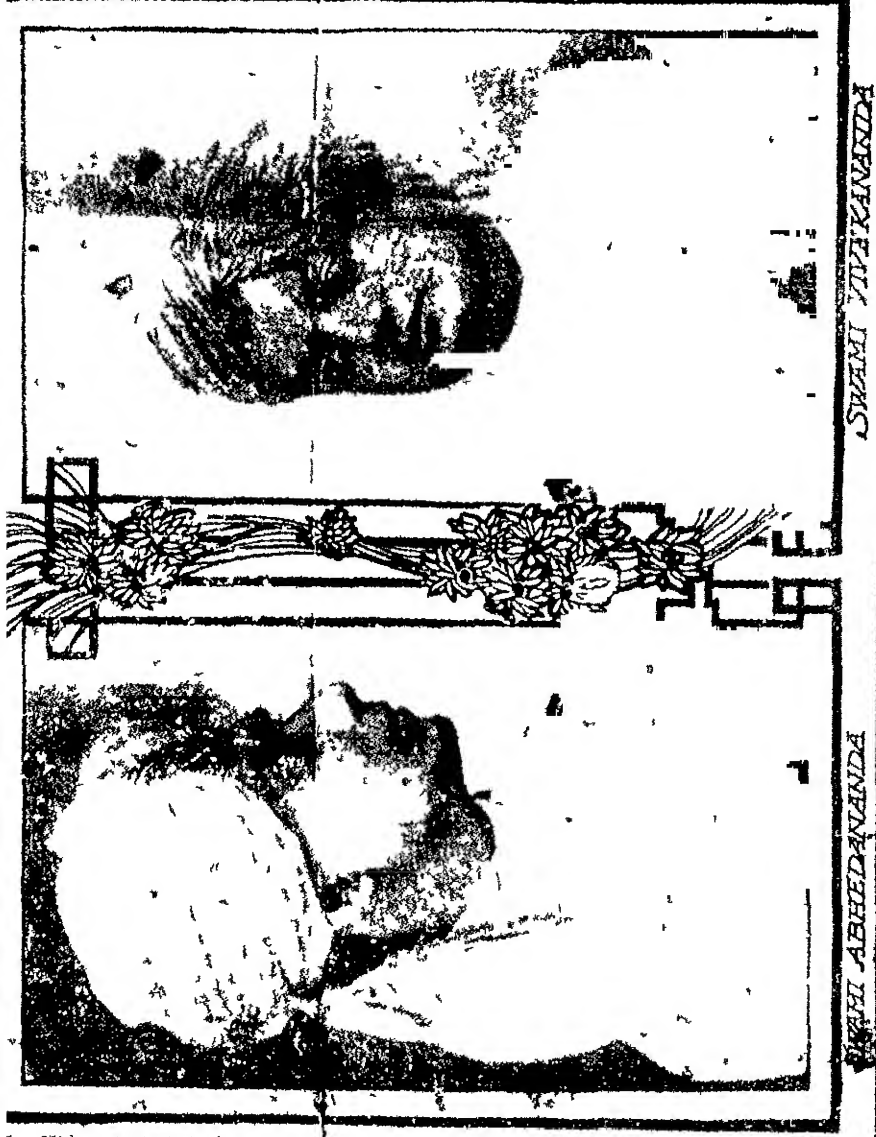


Swami Abhedananda in America



Swami Abhedananda in America

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SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

SWAMI ABHEDANANDA

Old and New Leaders of Vivekananda Society, U S A  
Swami Vivekananda and Swami Abhedananda ( from paper-cuttings )



Swami Abhedananda  
( meditative posture )

that Vidyaranya lived in the time of Harihara I, the King of Vijayanagai, and Harihara I was really the builder of Vijayanagar kingdom, the name of which was given after the name of Vidyaranya. But Mr R Rama Rao in his suggestive article on *Vidyaranya and Madhavacharya* (Cf *Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol VI, p 701) holds a quite different view. He says "King Bukka I is referred to as the patron, while the inscriptions of Vidyaranya are all of the reign of Harihara II (1377-1404)". But Dr Mahadevan contends "The evidence of the copper-plate grant is corroborated by a few inscriptions of the Tulava period which declare that the city of Vidyanagara was built by King Harihara I and named Vidyanagara in the name of Vidyaranya Sripada. Two inscriptions dated respectively 1538 and 1559 A D state that Harihara Raya built Vidyanagara in the name of Vidyaranya" (Vide *The Philosophy of Advaita*, p 4).

As regards the teacher or preceptor of Vidyaranya there is a dispute among the scholars. Some say that the teacher of Vidyaranya was Sankarananda, according to some, Bharati-Tirtha, while others hold that Vidyanda was the teacher of Vidyaranya. But Dr Dasgupta is of the opinion that Bharati-Tirtha, Vidyanda and Sankarananda, these three servants were the teachers of Vidyaranya. Appaya-Dikshit, the author of *Siddhantalesa samgraha* differs from it. He holds that Bharati-Tirtha and Vidyaranya refer to the same man. He calls that *Vivaranaprameya-samgraha* is no other than *Vivaranopranyasa*, as he admits 'विवरणोपन्यासे भारतीतीर्थवचनम्' and इति श्रीविवरणोपन्यासे ग्रन्थसर्वणक समाप्तम् in his celebrated work *Siddhantalesa-samgraha*. Dr Mahadevan also agrees with Appaya Dikshit and says "From the evidence afforded by the *Siddhantalesa* of Appaya Dikshit \* \*, we are led to the conclusion that Bharatatirtha was the author of the three works and that the name Vidyaranya was an appellation which was common to both Madhava and Bharatitirtha" (Cf *The Philosophy of Advaita*, p 7). Thus it follows from the foregoing lines that the title of 'Vidyaranya' was common, both to Madhava and Bharati Tirtha. Vidyaranya was not the name of any individual, and Madhavacharya-Vidyaranya and Bharati-Tirtha-Vidyaranya were quite different persons. Appaya-Dikshit says that Bharati-Tirtha-Vidyaranya was the author of

*Vivaranopanyasa* or *Viranaprameya-samgraha* According to Dr. Mahadeva, Bharati-Tirtha-Vidyaranya was senior to Madhavacharya-Vidyaranya though they were contemporaries. But Swami Abhedananda disagrees with this view and holds that Vidyaranya was the disciple or pupil of the *Sannyasin* Bharati-Tirtha.

### THE PHILOSOPHY

Swami Abhedananda says that the Absolute is called in Vedanta Brahman, *Jnana* is another word for knowledge. The term which the Vedantists use for knowledge of the Absolute is *Brahmajnana*. So, Vedanta means *Brahmajnana* or *Atmajnana*. Such being the scriptural or literal meaning of the word Vedanta, the scriptural literature of the Hindus which deals with the *Brahmajnana*, is also called Vedanta. The most ancient part of this scriptural literature which the Hindus believe as revealed, is the *Upanishad*.

The Swami says that *Upanishads*, *Gita* and the *Sutras* of *Baddhanaya* form the three *Prasthānas* or steps to the realization of the underlying essence of all phenomena. These three being the basic literature of the Vedantic school, volumes after volumes of commentaries and annotations were written on them in prose and in verse by Sankaracharya and his disciples and other Advaitists who flourished later. *Panchadasī* is one of these works on the Vedanta philosophy written in verse by Madhavacharya (Sayana), the great commentator of the Vedic literature. Few countries have ever produced such a voluminous writer as Madhava. Madhava was at first the prime minister of the King Bukka of South India and he flourished some 400 years after Sankaracharya (eight or ninth century A.D.). Afterwards he renounced his ministership, property, and worldly position and entered the order of the *Sannyasins*. He was initiated into that order by a *Sannyasin* named Bharati-Tirtha and, thenceforth, was called Vidyaranya.

It is said that the first six chapters of *Panchadasī* was written by Bharati-Tirtha, but his sudden and unexpected death left the work to be completed by his disciple who wrote the remaining nine chapters. The word *Panchadasī* comes



from the Sanskrit *panchadasa* which means fifteen and the book is called *Panchudasi* on account of its having fifteen chapters. The *Panchadasa* contains altogether 1530 *slokas* or verses and is divided into three books, each containing five chapters.

Swami Abhedananda says that in the first chapter the true nature of the unconditioned Brahman is explained. We can never define this unconditioned Brahman, because every thought of the human mind or reasoning faculty will be under some condition or relation while Brahman transcends them all. Brahman is beyond space and time, beyond thought and all human expressions. It is indescribable and unspeakable. It is a state where all desires for transitory and worldly things vanish, where peace and happiness reign through all eternity and where all qualities of ego and non-ego end, and the whole universe merges into one ocean of universal consciousness. After realizing that superconscious state of perfect bliss and unity, the Vedantic sages declare in a trumpet voice before the world

वेदादमेतं पुरुषं महान्तं आदित्यवर्णं तमसं परस्तात् ।

तमेव विदित्वातिमृत्युमेति, नान्यं पन्था विद्यते अयनाय ॥

‘I have reached that one conscious Being, effulgent with Divine light and beyond the limits of darkness. Knowing Him alone one attains that state which is beyond the reach of death. There is no alternative course to it.’

The ancient sages began to coin different words to give a clear idea what they realized in the superconscious state. Most of these words are of negative categories (*neti mulakam*). Its attributes are also in negative form. It is without colour, form, and smell, etc. Very few words in the affirmative have been accepted as correct to represent the Brahman. Words are relative and carry with them a conditional sense, but the Brahman is unconditional. So, we must be cautious while using the words for describing the unconditioned. Suppose, if we use existence, intelligence, and bliss to describe Brahman, we must take their meanings not as used ordinarily, but in their absolute sense, and not in the *achyārtha* but in their *lakshyārtha*. The Brahman is described

in *Panchadas* as *sat-chit ananda*, pure existence consciousness bliss. It is also established in the first chapter that the soul of man is, in reality, a part and parcel of the Brahman, conditioned by the illusive nature of *maya* which makes it appear different from the Brahman, individualizes it, and forces it to think, feel, perceive, sense, and do all sorts of work.

The Swami says as to what is *maya*? *Maya* is a name given by the Vedantists to that eternal energy whose manifestations are the phenomena universe. This inscrutable *maya* acting upon the ocean of Brahman, produces waves which we call the organic and inorganic phenomena of nature. She manifests herself as atoms and molecules. She attracts them, combines them, so as to produce all the elements and constructs out of them myriads of suns, moons, stars, and solar system. Even the greatest minds stand stupefied in dumb astonishment when they try to think of that supreme power whose inkling has evolved this gigantic manifestation. *Maya* or *Prakriti* has three *gunas* or qualities, *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*. The broad and general sense of the word *maya* as expressed in *Panchadas*, is *Prakriti*, and the word *mayas* has been used in a little restricted sense.

The *Panchadas* divides *Prakriti* into *maya* and *avidya*

तमोऽजःसत्त्वगुणा प्रकृतिर्द्विविधा च सा ॥

सत्त्वशुद्धयविशुद्धिभ्या मायाविद्ये च ते मते ।

When *sattva guna* or power by which we can know things as they are, is not overcome by *rajas* (activity) and *tamas* (ignorance), and on the other hand, *sattva* prevails over *rajas* and *tamas*, then only *Prakriti* is called *maya*. When *sattva guna* is overcome by *rajas* and *tamas*, the *Prakriti* is called *avidya*. The *sattva* is described as a pure reflecting substance that has the power of catching the image of Brahman and reflecting it; just as a mirror reflects and casts the rays of the same on all sides.

Now *maya* together with the image of the Brahman reflected therein is *Isvara* or the creator, preserver and destroyer of the universe. *Isvara* of Vedanta is the same as God. He is all-pervading, all-powerful, all-knowing, and all-merciful.

The reflection of Brahman in *avidya* is the *jiva* or the conditioned Brahman in man. Vachaspati Mishra called the

*jiva* as the locus (*adhithana*) of *maya*, whereas the Vivarana school called the Brahman as the locus of *maya*. In Vedanta, *jiva* is called *prajna* or partial knower, while *Isvara* is all-knowing and universal. The *jiva* or individual soul or ego gets the name *prajna* when he assumes *avidya* as his *karana-sharira* or causal body. Panchadasi teaches that there are three bodies of every man: (1) the *sthula-sharira*, the gross material body, (2) the *sukshma-sharira*, the subtle body, and (3) the *karana-sharira*, the causal body. The last one is the cause of the other two bodies, or, in other words, it contains the seeds of the subtle and the gross bodies.

मायाविम्बो वशीकृत्य तां स्यात् सर्वज्ञ ईश्वर ।

अविद्यावशगत्स्वन्यस्तद्वैचित्र्यादनेकधा ॥

*Jiva*, or the individual soul with his subtle body is called *tanusa*. The subtle body contains the internal organs or mind (*antahikarana*), in its different manifestation, the five instruments of knowledge (*gnanendriyas*), the senses of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and touching, five instruments of actions (*karmendriyas*), power of seizing, moving, speaking, excreting, and generating, and the five *pranas* is the vital energy in us. Although it is one, it has five different names on account of the five different functions it performs. While working in the upper part its name is *prana*, and that which moves the lower part is *apana*. When it performs digestive function it is *samana*, and when it is the cause of bringing down food from the alimentary canal to the stomach it is *udana*. Again, it is *vyana* when it works through the canals of the body.

Swami Abhedananda writes that when *jiva* identifies himself with the gross body, he is called *vista*. This gross body contains the instruments through which those senses or *indriyas* and *pranas* work on the material plane. The gross body dies with its physical instruments, but the *jiva* or inner man can never die or lose his powers, impressions and thoughts. *Jiva*, or the inner man, goes to heaven or hell, or to any other planet. He assumes different bodies, and wherever he goes, he carries with him his subtle body, which is the seed of his gross body. All these divisions, differentiations and limitations, says Panchadasi, are imposed on the *Atman*. They are

false like *maya*. They have no independent status. They cannot bring any change in the unchangeable, just as the apparent redness of a crystal cannot affect its genuine whiteness and transparency when a red object is placed near it. The qualities of the changeable are often attributed to the unchangeable. This process is called the superimposition or *adhyasa* which is caused by *avidya*. *Jiva* conditioned by *avidya* and entangled in the meshes of the three bodies, thinks himself as actor (*kartā*) and enjoyer (*bhoktā*). As long as these two ideas of being actor (*kartitva*) and enjoyer (*bhaktitva*) will remain in *Jiva*, he will have to go on with his work and enjoy the fruits coming therefrom. Even after the death of the body he still retains the ideas of doer (*kartitva*) and enjoyer (*bhoktita*). These two ideas will bring forth desires as their offspring and as long as these desires will remain, they will create new bodies. So, *Panchadasī* says 'When one can transcend the sense of self, as well as bring under control the desires, this can be defined as *shokapanodana*. And the pleasure and satisfaction one derives from it may be defined as *tripti* and *harsa*'.

'In Sanskrit, the desires are called *vasanās*. The desires for work and enjoyment are the cause of our birth and re-birth. If these desires remain in us, we shall be born again and again. As these desires are, therefore, the roots of all our works, good or bad. *Jiva* cannot escape from reaping what he has sown. So, he enjoys pleasure and pain which are the results of his works, good or bad. Thus fettered by the trammels of *karma*, *Jiva* moves on from one body to another enjoying or suffering the good or bad results of his own deeds.

The Swami says, is there no end to this process of births and re-births? Can we not be free from the inevitable law of *karma*? To this the author of the *Panchadasī* raises these questions

ब्रजन्तो जन्मनो जन्म लभन्ते नैव निवृत्तिम् ॥

सत् कर्म परिपाकात् ते कण्ठा निधिनोद्धता ।

प्राप्य तीतरुच्छायां विश्राम्यन्ति यथासुखम् ॥

That is, as a small insect falling into the current of a river passes from one whirlpool to another and does not find a

resting place, so the individual soul passes from one birth to another without finding rest or peace. But if any kind-hearted man seeing the miserable plight of an insect in the rapid current and places the insect under the shade of a tree on the bank, it escapes the ever-running current of the water. Similarly, the *Jiva* can escape the continuous recurring births and deaths, if any God-realized man shows him the path to freedom and peace. Following the advice of the realized man, the *Jiva* can be liberated from the pangs and cares of the deceitful world.

Then comes the spiritual practice, which is essential for the Sadhakas. Nowhere we can find in world's history, except in India, that the highest metaphysical conception has formed the basis of a religion. The religion of Vedanta is not merely theoretical, but is practical. The *Upanishad* says that if we are unable to call into action religion, religion is meaningless. In India, religion is realization of the universal soul in the individual self. It is being and becoming one with that eternal existence.

The union, i.e., identity with the supreme pure consciousness forms the keynote of the Vedantic religion. Vedanta proclaims that the oneness with the Brahman is the ultimate end of human life. It is the be-all and end-all of individual existence. It is the final goal of all searches after Truth. What becomes after regaining the state of oneness is described in the following lines of the *Upanishad*.

भियते हृदयग्रन्थिश्चिद्यन्ते सर्वसंशयाः ।

क्षीयन्ते चास्य कर्मानि तस्मिन् दृष्टे परावरे ॥

That is, when man reaches that state of oneness, all knots of desires are torn asunder, all doubts and questions are solved for ever, and all works with their fruits are transcended.

But how to attain such a state of oneness or freedom? To this *Panchadasi* says that by right knowledge of the Brahman we can realize oneness with the Brahman, and, consequently, absolute freedom. And as before day-light the darkness of night disappears, so darkness of false knowledge (*mithya-pratyaya*) vanishes before the light of right knowledge.

Vedanta says that this world is the manifested form of

*maya* These phenomena are nothing but the *apparent* waves in the ocean of the Brahman. We live and move and have our being in the Brahman. These names and forms (*nama-rupa*) are the *maya*. They are the cause of projection (*sristi*). The Brahman *appears* as different only for name and form, otherwise it is pure and one without the second. The *Panchadasī* says 'नामरूपोपाधिभेदं विना नैव सतो भिदा ।' But the Brahman is never affected by name and form, nor by time and space. It is unchangeable amidst all changes. The *Panchadasī* says,

प्रवहस्यपि नीरेव स्थिरा प्रौढा शिला यथा ।

नमरूपान्यथात्वेऽपि कूटस्य ब्रह्म नान्यथा ॥

'As a rushing stream cannot dislodge a huge stone, so the Brahman remains unaffected amidst the changes of names and forms. Without the support of the Brahman names and forms cannot exist. The *Panchadasī* describes it as,

निश्चिद्रे दर्पणे भाति वस्तुगर्भं ऋद्वियत् ।

सच्चिद्वदने तथा नानाजगद्गममिदं वियत् ॥

That is, as in a mirror one can see the reflected images of every object, likewise everything having a name and a form is revealed by the Brahman.

In truth, every particle of matter in the universe is Brahman conditioned by name and form. This divine vision of the Brahman is called in Vedānta *samyag darsana* or direct and right knowledge. This *samyag-darsana* is acquired by *vichara* or proper analysis of the true nature of things and by realizing the Brahman. Regarding the necessity of *vichara*, *Panchadasī* says,

ब्रह्म यद्यपि शास्त्रेषु प्रत्यक्षत्वेण वर्णितम् ।

महावाक्यैः स्थाप्येतत् दुर्बोधमविचारिणः ॥

Although the individual soul has been described as Brahman in the *mahavakyas* or the great Vedic words, yet it is very difficult to understand for them who do not practise *vichara* or proper analysis of spirit and matter—*jada* and *chaitanya*.

What these *mahavakyas* are and what do they mean? The

*mahavakyas* are the great words which contain the fundamental ideas of Vedanta. The *Panchadasī* also deals with these *mahavakyas* and explains them in an explicit way. They are four in number:

(1) *Tattvam-asī* (तत्त्वमसि) i.e. *tat* means 'that' i.e. Brahman and the individual self is denoted by *tvam*, i.e. 'thou'. So, *tat tvam asī* means 'That, Thou art' or the self is Brahman.

(2) *Aham Brahmasmi* (अहं ब्रह्मास्मि) i.e., I am Brahman.

(3) *Ayamātmā Brahman* (अयं आत्मा ब्रह्म) i.e., this *Atman* or the individual soul is Brahman.

(4) *Prajñānam Brahman* (प्रज्ञानं ब्रह्म) i.e., the pure consciousness is Brahman (Vide the *Panchadasī*, VI 8).

Acharya Sankara divided all kinds of *Sannyasi* into ten categories (*dasa nāmis*), and these four *mahavakyas* are the mediums of their discriminating analysis.

The consciousness which exists in connection with our intelligence, is the source of our speech, desires, and all kinds of work. This consciousness can be defined as the *prajñāna*. 'The great soul is existing in the gross material bodies of different animals as the ruler of their minds. The great soul is existing within me. So, we can take the supreme consciousness and *prajñāna* together as the Brahman. The supreme consciousness being guided by the phenomenal emanation, is existing within the gross body as witness of everything. As it is guided by the phenomenal emanation being present within the gross body, so we can define it as the self. The word Brahman means the ever-present prime Soul. The word *asmi* implies that individual consciousness or reflected consciousness is (Brahman). As self means individual consciousness, so we can easily deduce that one who transcends the phenomena emanation, is the Brahman. Before emanation or projection, the supreme Soul (*Atman*) alone existed. It is also existing in the same state now. So, we can define it as *tat*. We can define our reflected consciousness as *tam*. Therefore, *tat* and *tam* have no difference between them. We ought to know this. The reflected consciousness which is self-luminous can be defined as *ayam*. It is also known as self, because desires are guiding it. Therefore, we can deduce that this reflected consciousness is known

as self, and *ayam* Brahman is the source, i.e., ground of everything. It is self-luminous. Therefore, we can deduce that no difference exists between self and the supreme self, the Brahman.

The Swami says that the *mahavakyas* are expressed in the form of aphorisms which contain the central truth of Vedanta philosophy. The *Panchadasī* again says,

देहाद्यात्वविभ्रान्तौ जाग्रता न हठात् पुमान् ।

ब्रह्मात्मत्वेन विज्ञातु क्षमते मन्दधीत्वतः ॥

'As long as there remain in us wrong knowledge, as long as we will mistake the body for the self, so long it will be impossible for us to realize the true nature of the self as the Brahman. The mistake is the false knowledge. We can get rid of it only by *vichara* or discrimination. Thus, according to the teachings of *Panchadasī* we learn that *vichara* is the first means that helps us to acquire the *samyag-darsana*. The *Panchadasī* says that by logical discourse or ratiocination (*vichara*) we can get the right knowledge of the *Atman* as right knowledge that dispels the darkness of ignorance. Therefore, we should determine by ratiocination the nature of the world (*jagat*), the individual petty self (*jiva*) and the highest Self (*Paramatman*). Because knowledge derived from *vichara*, if it once becomes permanent, nothing can hinder it. It destroys all delusions. So *vichara* like the thrashing of corn must be continued till the grain of right knowledge appears. Again the *Panchadasī* says,

अनेकजन्मजननात् स्वविचारं चिकीर्षति ।

विचारेण विनष्टायां मायायां शिष्यते स्वयम् ॥

That is, a man follows the path of ratiocination and true knowledge after spending many past lives in prayer (*upāsana*). By ratiocination, nescience is cancelled and knowledge of the Brahman is regained. The false imposition of duality upon the non-dual Brahman is called bondage, and the right knowledge of the Brahman is known as freedom. The *Panchadasī* says further that bondage is due to want of right knowledge, and it can be cancelled or sublated only by *vichara*. Therefore, everyone should determine who is the *Jiva* and



who is the *Paramatman* (Brahman)

अद्वयानन्दरूपस्य सद्ब्रयत्वञ्च दुःखिता ।  
बन्ध प्रोक्त स्वरूपेण स्थितिमुक्तिरितीयते ॥  
अविचारकृतो बन्धो विचारेण निवर्तते ।  
तस्माज्जीव परात्मानौ सर्वदेव विचारयेत् ॥

But, for those who are not so intellectually advanced as to be able to practise this kind of *vichara*, *Panchadasī* says

यो विचार न लभ्यते ब्रह्मोपसीति सोऽनिशम् ।

That is 'he who is not able to make *vichara*, must meditate upon Brahman within. The process of meditation is described as :

अतोपदेशं विश्वस्य श्रद्धालुरविचारयन् ।  
चिन्ततेत् प्रत्ययरन्यरनन्तरितवृत्तिभिः ॥

'Believing in the words of the enlightened, the faithful disciple should try to abstract his mind from external objects and concentrate upon the self without being disturbed by any other thought. This kind of meditation will make the false knowledge of the soul vanish by and by.' And when by constant meditation such false impression as 'my Self is the body,' 'I am born with the body' and 'I shall die with it' will disappear, the indivisible *Atman* is perceived in its fulness.

Whosoever will realize it, will remain eternally free even in this life. He will be one with the Brahman. He will come no more under the bondage of *maya* or delusion. Then he will act as witness (*saksi*) or seer of his mind, body, and whole universe. The *Panchadasī* says

विद्यायां सच्चिदानन्दा अखण्डैकरसात्मताम् ।  
प्राप्य भान्ति न भेदेन भेदकोपाधिवर्जनात् ॥  
\* \* \*  
निश्वाधिब्रह्मतत्त्वे भासमाने स्वयंप्रभे ।  
अद्वैते निपुटी नास्ति भुमानन्दोऽयमुच्यते ॥

Therefore, after attaining perfection in the Brahman-knowledge, one can realize the supreme Soul. At that time the

realized man perceives everything is saturated by the Brahman-knowledge. Owing to nescience one perceives the difference between him and the Brahman. But after attaining to right knowledge, no distinction is perceived by the realized soul. At that time *tripti*, i.e., subject, object and relation, is vanished. That supreme state is defined as the *bhūmānanda* or the highest pleasure and eternal bliss. The fortunate man who attains to this superconscious state, is called the *Jñān-mukta*, i.e., one who is liberated in one's lifetime. The *Jñān-mukta* thinks and says "I have known the supreme *Ātman*, therefore, I am happy, I am enjoying highest bliss, therefore, I am happy, I am free from the worldly bonds, I am also free from the chains of delusion, therefore, I am happy. I have no obligation to anyone, I have attained that highest object, for which I was practising so long, therefore, I am happy. I am enjoying the sublime bliss, therefore, I am the happiest of the happy."

## CHAPTER XV

### THOUGHTS ON SANKHYA, BUDDHISM AND VEDANTA

In this lecture Swami Abhedananda has given the central points of *Sankhya*, Buddhism and Vedanta philosophy. It was delivered in lecture forms before the talented audiences in America. In the first chapter, he has given an introduction of the philosophies of India.

In the second chapter, he has efficiently dealt with the *Sankhya* philosophy of Kapila. The Swami has said that Kapila was the father of the doctrine of evolution, because he was first among the Indian philosophers, who gave the logical arguments for the support of the doctrine of evolution. The Swami has explained here in a lucid way the general principles of the *Sankhya*, as expounded by Kapila.

In the third chapter, the Swami has compared the personalities of both Buddha and Kapila, before explaining the general tenets of philosophy of Buddhism and *Sankhya*.

In the fourth chapter, the Swami has described the Buddhist Council and the central thoughts of Buddhism. Immediately after the *parinirvana* of Gautama Buddha in 543 B.C., five hundred Arhats gathered at Rajgriha at the request of venerable Mahakasyapa and Ananda, the most favourite disciple of Buddha and repeated the stories and parables of the *Suttapitaka*, and this was the First Buddhist Council. Then one hundred years after the *parinirvana* of the Lord, the Second Buddhist Council was held at Varsali. The Third Council was held during the reign of the Emperor Asoka in Pataliputra in about 243 B.C., when the sayings and teachings of the three *Pitakas* were arranged and written, and the Fourth Council was held during the reign of the Emperor Kaniska who lived in the 4th century after the *parinirvana* of Buddha. Swami Abhedananda has mentioned in brief the historical happenings of the four Councils, and has given the philosophical thoughts, contained in the

four main schools, practically evolved after the Fourth Council

In the fifth chapter, the Swami has explained the main seculative thoughts of Buddhism and Vedanta in a comparative way and has shown also the difference of them, when necessary

In the sixth chapter, the Swami has explained the ethics of Hinduism and Buddhism. He has said that Buddhism is a child of Hinduism, as Buddhism is contained of the fundamental principles of ethical ideas of Hinduism. The grandest of the ethical law, that is taught by the Vedas, is the law of universal love, and this universal love and compassion towards the living beings of the universe were preached by Buddha. So Hinduism and Buddhism are the liberal and universal systems of religion and religious faith which have adopted the elements of ethics for observing the strict moral values and spiritual ideals in human life.

In the seventh chapter, Swami Abhedananda has dealt with the problem of international ethics. This lecture was delivered in the thirty-first Annual Convention of the Free Religious Association of America, held on Friday, May 27th, 1898, in the Steinert Hall, Boston, before a large gathering. In this lecture, the Swami has proved that unity in variety is the best principle of ethics, and this principle is based on spiritual laws of the world. The moment we realize that we are one in spirit with the Father in Heaven, we become kind to all, we love all living creatures, and attain to freedom and peace, which are the supreme aim of all religions and of all nations.

In the eighth chapter, the Swami has described about the spread of Buddhism in the countries like China, Japan, and Korea, and has given historical records of the temples and monasteries of China. He has also mentioned about the religious sects of the ancient Chinese country. There was a time when there was a bond of culture and religious ideas between the two great countries, India and China. The arts and music of India also travelled to ancient China, and they were firmly accepted by the then Ruler of China and also by the people. The ancient China was indebted to India.

In the ninth chapter, the Swami has elaborately dealt with Shintoism in Japan. The Swami has said that there are three

religions in Japan, and they are Shintoism, native to their own soil, Confucianism, introduced from China, and Buddhism, which came from Korea in 552 A.D. Shintoism was of Chinese origin, and was adopted in Japan about the middle of the 7th century A.D.

In the tenth chapter, the Swami has dealt with the history and mystery of Lamaism in Tibet. There is also Bon religion in Tibet, and it was introduced before the spread of Buddhism in Tibet. Now the word 'Lama' is a Tibetan term, meaning the 'Superior One', and the religion of the Lamas are known as Lamaism. The Swami says that the Lamas do not call their special form of Buddhism by the name of 'Lamaism', but they say, "The Religion of Buddha's Religion", and there is no Tibetan counterpart for the English term of Lamaism. The Lamaism or the Religion of the Lamas may be divided into three main heads, primitive, mediaeval and modern. In fact, Lamaism evolved from the Mahayana Buddhism and afterwards took some new shapes with special creeds and rituals.

Two Appendices are added and they are Ralph Waldo Emerson's Poem 'Brahman' and 'True Nature of the Atman'. The first appendix was written and delivered in New York on April 4, 1921, by Swami Abhedananda, in commemoration of the famous poem 'Brahm' (Brahman), by Emerson. Emerson went to visit Carlyle in England, and had conversation with him. Emerson read Carlyle's English translation of the *Bhagavad Gita* and incorporated the ideas that he gathered from the *Gita*, into his poem, which is called 'Brahm'. The first verse begins thus

If the reader slayer think he slays,  
Or if the slain think he is slain,  
They know not well the subtle ways,  
I keep, and pass, and turn again

In the 19th verse of the second chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita*, it has been said,

य एनं वेत्ति हन्तारं यश्चैनं मन्यते हतम् ।  
उभौ तौ न बिजानीतो नायं हन्यि न हन्यते ॥

In his essay on *Immortality*, Emerson quoted passages from the *Upanishad*, i.e., *Katha-Upanishad*. The immortality

is the nature of the Brahman, or it can be said that immortality is itself the Brahman. The transcending (*turiya*) Brahman cannot be grasped by mind or intellect, so we will have to grasp first its manifested form, which is *Ishvara*, the third principle. *Ishvara* shines as causal form (*karana-Brahman*), whereas his subtle form is known as *Hiranyagarbha* or *karya-Brahman*. *Hiranyagarbha-Brahman* is known as the First-born Lord, who projects out of his cosmic mind all the gross phenomenal appearance. So we are nothing, but results of thought forms that arise in the cosmic mind. There is the pattern, the pattern of a horse, the pattern of a cow, of a camel, of a tree, and the pattern of a perfect man in the cosmic mind in the form of ideas. There comes the Platonic idea, the eternal idea. There comes also the Logos here. Therefore, when we study Emerson's poem, *Brahm*, if we do not study it carefully we would not be able to understand what he meant by it.

Emerson studied the *Bhagavad Gita* and other scriptures. Swami Abhedananda said: "When I was with Mr. Malloy, \* \* he took me to Emerson's home, and I saw his valuable library. \* \* I saw that he had a volume of the Laws of Manu (*Manu-samhitā*). \* \* He had also in his library the *Vishnu-purana*, which describes the life of Sri Krishna, and had (in his library), the *Upanishad*, which were translated into as well as differentiations of phenomenal names and forms and I was very much impressed. I saw a letter which Carlyle wrote to Emerson, and in that letter he mentioned about the teachings of the *Bhagavad Gita*, the *Song Celestial*. Therefore, Ralph Waldo Emerson, understanding the spirit of the *Bhagavad Gita*, made a free rendering of some of the passages and he immortalised the *Bhagavad Gita* by his poem on 'Brahm'."

The second appendix deals with *True Nature of the Atman*. The Swami says, that the *Atman* is the true nature of man and it is the absolute divinity of the cosmos. On the highest spiritual plane, there is no distinction, no idea of separation, no idea of creation or projection (*sristi*). All ideas of separateness as well as the differentiations of phenomenal names and forms (*nāma-rupa*) merge into the absolute ocean of Reality, which is unchangeable, eternal, and one without the second. It

(*Atman*) transcends the limit of nescience or *maya*, and pervades with its essence, the whole phenomenal universe. In the *Katha Upanishad*, this idea of true nature of the *Atman* is beautifully expressed, when it says 'In the cave of our heart have entered the two—the *Atman* or Divine Spirit and the individual ego or soul. The one (*Atman* or *Paramatman*) witnesses the other, while the individual soul (*jivatman*) reaps the fruits or rewards of its own works. The individual soul is known as the reflection of the higher Soul or *Atman*, and collection cannot exist independent of the light whose reflection it is, as the reflected face in the mirror cannot exist independent of the real face. So the soul of man cannot exist independent of the *Atman*.'

Starting from the gross form of the body, when a real seeker after Truth marches onward towards the *Atman*, he passes through all the intermediate stages of religious faith, dualistic, qualified non-dualistic and monistic, until he reaches the state of Divine communion, where he realizes oneness of the soul with the *Atman* or Brahman.

## CHAPTER XVI

### STEPS TOWARDS PERFECTION

*Steps towards Perfection* contains three lectures on the ultimate goal of the human life, namely, *The Steps towards Perfection*, *What is Perfection*, and *What is Nirvana*. Swami Abhedananda has shown the seven steps towards perfection or *mukti* and has said that the seventh step is the path of the spiritual illumination, which is known as the Divine realization or *brahmanubhuti*. The other steps, i.e., first to sixth ones are helpful to the seventh one. In the seventh step, the highest nature of the human being runs with tremendous force like a mighty river running towards the ocean of the Absolute, the course of which nothing can restrain. And the highest step or the ultimate aim of the human life is to obtain Godconsciousness, and this Godconsciousness can be attained even in this mundane life.

To make it explicit, Swami Abhedananda has said in the first lecture that the seven steps are generally conceived for the progress in the path of the Divine illumination or God-realization, and they are (1) the intense longing for the knowledge of the absolute Truth, and the awakening of the soul, (2) the purification of the mind or heart, (3) the practice of truthfulness and disinterested love for humanity, (4) the right discrimination, (5) the dispassion of the will, (6) the spiritual enlightenment, and (7) the spiritual illumination or attainment of Godconsciousness. Now, these are the steps, and the seventh one is not really the step, but the highest achievement or goal. The Swami says that these steps or the grades of the spiritual *sadhana* must sincerely be practised by every seeker of Divine knowledge, and then he will be able to correct the error of false knowledge. The Swami has explained that these grades of *sadhana* prepare the ground for receiving the spiritual illumination. So the seekers and lovers of the Brahman-knowledge should practise them.

In the second lecture, *What is Perfection*, Swami Abhedananda has said that it is by comparison we come to know



that there are different grades in the physical, intellectual, moral and spiritual planes of human existence. But the moment we come to know about the different grades, we stop in one particular grade, and try to struggle to step forward towards the next higher grade, and this striving helps men to reach the final step or goal which consoles them and confers upon them the boon of permanent peace and happiness.

In the third lecture, *What is Nirvana*, the Swami has discussed about the Buddhistic conception of *mukti*, and has told that it is not void or non-existent something (*sunya*), but is *suchness* or *thatness* (*tathatā*). The conception of Nirvana is not a new one, or not a new product of the Buddhist investigation, but the idea of Nirvana also exists in the Vedic literature. In the *Upanishads*, we find the word Brahman 'Nirvana' which means the attainment of knowledge of the absolute Brahman which eternally removes the sorrows and all kinds of desire. Buddha used the term Nirvana in the same sense. Buddha said that Nirvana can be attained by the cessation of *tanhā* or *trishnā*, i.e., all desires.

The realization of God is described in Vedānta as the highest ideal of the earthly existence as well as the final goal of all religions, which means perfection. A Christian, a Mohammedan, a Jew, a Buddhist, and a Hindu equally aims to become someday conscious of the divine Spirit, which is the Lord of the universe and which is the Soul of our souls. The followers of all sects and creeds hold this ideal, although they march through their chosen paths, and fix their mind upon this one goal, the knowledge of God or realization of the eternal Truth. Their paths may vary, but their goal is one and the same. A Christian, for instance, may follow the path, laid down by Jesus of Nazareth and by His votaries. He may hold the Christ on the cross as the highest ideal. He may repeat His holy name reverentially, and bow down to Him, expecting His divine grace and to be saved from the eternal perdition. He may think that his sins will be washed off by the blood of the Only Begotten Son of the Heavenly Father, and eventually he will enter into the celestial abode, where he hopes to come in direct touch with the almighty Spirit, and where he expects to feel the Divinity both within and outside of the soul. A Moham-

medan, on the contrary, may not believe in the worship of Jesus the Christ, he may not care for the path of salvation laid down by the Christians, but still he aspires to know God by following the path of Mohammad, the only prophet of his Lord who is called Allah. A Jew may not worship Christ, and may follow the teachings of Moses, but yet he expects to realize Jahveh in the end. A Buddhist may not believe in any personal God, and may not care to go to Heaven, but he tries to realize the idea which was realized by Buddha and other saviours. The word 'Buddha' means 'the Enlightened', as he attained to perfection, or communion with the eternal truth or knowledge. In this manner, we can prove that all the religions of the world hold the ideal of realization above all other ideals. Although the paths, described in these religions, may vary, yet the ultimate goal is one and the same. The followers of different religions and faith quarrel only on the paths, but when they reach the goal, there remains no quarrel and disharmony. In nineteenth century, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa came and showed by the example of his ideal life that faiths and paths (*sadhanas*) may vary, but the ultimate goal is one and the same, and so he preached *yata mata tata patha* which bring a perfect harmony among different faiths and religions of the world.

## CHAPTER XVII

### HOW TO BE A YOGI

*How to be a Yogi* is a book on science and practice of different types of Yoga, which are interconnected with religion and philosophy and to be called into practice. These lectures were delivered by Swami Abhedananda before the American students of Yoga and philosophy and were published in book form from the Vedanta Ashrama, San Francisco, California, U S A

In this book, Swami Abhedananda has consecutively surveyed the science and practice of Yoga as a whole. This book contains nine illuminating chapters on different types of Yoga along with their philosophy, psychology, and science. In the introductory chapter, the Swami has defined what is true religion. He says that true religion is not based on mere theory or speculation, but on practice. Religion really prepares the ground of divine spirituality which does not depend on mere reading of the scriptures, not on the theological and speculative discussion of the *shastras*, and not on intellect and reason, but on realization or divine immediate awareness of the unchangeable Reality.

Swami Abhedananda has said that he had the good fortune to be acquainted with a divine man, whose name is Ramakrishna Paramahansa. He never went to any school, neither he read any of the scriptures and philosophies, yet had reached perfection by realizing the absolute Brahman. From this it is understood that true spirituality and God-realization do not depend on any book-knowledge, nor on the intellectual apprehension, but on the sincere spiritual practice of Yoga which makes a man commune with the Absolute. Swami Abhedananda also says that self-knowledge is acquired neither by sense perception, nor by reading of the *shastras*, but by studying one's own nature, and by practising different branches of Yoga.

The second chapter deals with the discussion on *What is Yoga*. In this chapter, the learned Swami has given the eleven definitions of Yoga. In the eleventh definition he says that Yoga

means the restraint of all thought-actions through concentration and meditation. Yoga is derived from the Sanskrit root, *yuj*, which means 'to join, i.e., to join the *jivatman* with the *Paramatman*'. The practitioners of Yoga are mainly divided into three classes, and among them the born Yogis are included in the first class, the half-awakened souls are included in the second class, and the aspiring souls are included in the third class.

The third chapter is devoted to discussion on the Hatha Yoga. Hatha Yoga is the science which teaches to conquer the hunger, thirst, sleep, diseases, etc. Some Hatha Yogis practise *trataka*, and fix their eyes in the centre of the eyebrows, for gaining concentration as well as some psychic powers.

The Swami has defined different kinds of *asana* or the sitting-posture to be practised by the Hatha Yogi. But he warns the Hatha Yogis not to practise Yoga which develops the psychic powers, and instructs them to practise that kind of Yoga which is helpful to the Raja Yoga, because the Raja Yoga leads the souls to realization of Godconsciousness and to perfect freedom.

In the fourth chapter, Swami Abhedananda has discussed the laws and science of the Raja Yoga which is known as the royal road, or the surest path to perfection. The Raja Yoga deals entirely with the mind and its powers, and so it may be called the science of applied psychology. This best and grandest method of Yoga teaches to strengthen the will of the mind, and to develop the powers of concentration and meditation, which lead to the state of superconsciousness.

The practice of Raja Yoga is divided into eight steps like *yama*, *niyama*, *asana*, *pranayama*, *pratyahara*, *dharana*, *dhyana* and *samadhi*. The *asana* is the posture of sitting. Patanjali says that a suitable and easy *asana* can be chosen for making the spinal cord straight and for taking the breath without any obstruction and difficulty. The Yogis say that the vital power or energy is stored up in the nerve-centres of the spinal cord, and is the cause of the motion of the lungs, which in turn produces respiration, and respiration is the cause of the circulation of blood and of all other organic activity, so the spinal cord should be kept straight to help the

current flow easily through the channel of the spinal cord. The *pratyahara* is the preparatory ground for concentration. Concentration means to reduce the divergent desires or manifold modifications of the mind into their causal state and to make them concentrate upon one point. *Samadhi* is the state of superconsciousness. Patanjali divided this supreme state into different classes, and said that *nirvya* or *nirvikalpa samadhi* is the highest one, where all the seeds of desire and the cause of the cycle of birth and rebirths are eternally transcended. The process of concentration transforms the mind into the pure consciousness. In the highest state of *samadhi*, a Sadhaka gains the spiritual illumination, and cuts asunder the knots of nescience or *avidya*.

In the fifth chapter, the Swami has dealt with the Karma Yoga. The Swami says that the word 'Karma Yoga' connotes the idea of 'dexterity in work'. The spirit of worship must be the keynote of all kinds of work, and the work with this divine spirit is known as philosophy of work. The Swami further says that, in truth, we do work through the inspiration-cum-dictation of the will of the mind, so if we purify our mind with the spirit of worship of God and give up all kinds of ego-centric idea from our mind, the mind is concentrated and enjoys tranquil peace and happiness. The Swami says, "He who wishes to practise the Karma Yoga, should abandon the attachment to the fruits of his labours, and learn to work for work's sake, \* \*". The teachings of the *Bhagavad Gita* is that you have the right to do the works, and not to ask or enjoy the fruits thereof. So the works with love for God and love for the humanity are known as the Karma Yoga which is the precondition of the Bhakti Yoga.

In the sixth chapter, Swami Abhedananda has described the main principles of Bhakti Yoga. The Bhakti Yoga is the path to devotion for God and also the path to love for all the creatures of the world. The Swami says, "The word *bhakti* means 'devotion', while Yoga, in this case, signifies the union of the individual soul with God. Hence the Bhakti Yoga is the method of devotion by which true communion of the soul with the supreme Deity is accomplished." There are mystics all over the world, who devote their lives in the holy-service of the beloved God. The Christian mystics, the German

mystics, the Spanish mystics and other mystics of other nations are like the Vaishnava mystics of India and the Sufis of Arabia. The Swami says that the *prana* is the king and the *prana* should be controlled for calming down the activities of the mind, because the *prana* and the *manas* (mind) are inter-connected together. Again mind is the finest vibration of the *prana*, and matter is the grossest vibration of the *prana*. So the mind and the matter are no other than the *prana* in vibration. The nerve-centres of the spinal cord (*merudanda*) are the main stations where this vital force is stored up. There are many centres in the spinal cord which vitalizes the whole body, including its organs. All sensations and motions of the limbs depend upon the nerve-centre in the spinal column and the brain. There are two currents, which flow in and out of the brain through the spinal column and nerves, they are called the afferent and efferent currents (in Sanskrit, *ida* and *pingala*). They run through the anterior and posterior channels of the spinal cord, and these furnish the two paths, over which the currents of the *prana* travel. The nervous energy is scattered throughout the system, and the only means of regulating it, is by controlling the principal centres or stations in the spinal column. Therefore, if any one wishes to control the *prana*, he must learn to govern the chief stations through which it works. The *prana* being controlled, the mind is controlled and there reigns the tranquil peace.

( ) "The ninth chapter has been devoted to the historical and mystical discussion on *Was Christ a Yogi*. It is a historical fact that Christ came to India and travelled the holy places of India, and learned the practice of Yoga from the Indian Yogis. Swami Abhedananda has shown that Christ's Divine realization was the result of his Indian yogic-cum-vedantic *sadhana*. In his Bengali book, *Kashmir O Tibbete*, the Swami has given the historical account of Christ's visit to India. In that book, he has given an account or a record of Christ's journey and visit to India from a Tibetan manuscript, preserved in the Hemis Monastery in Ladak. The Russian traveller Notovitch has seen that record in that Monastery, and has given the detailed account of Christ's stay for nearly eighteen years. Swami Abhedananda also makes that manuscript of the Hemis

Monastery to be translated by a senior Tibetan Monk. It is interesting to note that this chapter on *Was Christ a Yogi* has been adopted in an important book, *Adept of Galilee*, published in America.

Swami Abhedananda has beautifully proved in this last chapter that Christ was a true Yogi and practised Yoga which enables him to realize the truths "I and my Father are one", and "Love thy neighbour as thyself". The Swami says "The greater position of the life of Jesus is absolutely unknown to us, and as He did not leave behind Him any systematic teaching regarding the method by which one may attain to that state of Godconsciousness which He Himself reached, there is no way of finding out what He did or practised during the eighteen years that elapsed before His appearance in public". Jesus the Christ was a great Yogi, because He realized the transitory and ephemeral nature of the phenomenal world, and, discriminating the real from the unreal, renounced all desires for worldly pleasures and bodily comforts. Jesus the Christ was also a great Karma Yogi, "because He never worked for results, He had neither desire for name, nor ambition for fame or for earthly prosperity". Jesus of Nazareth also proved himself to be a great Bhakti Yogi, and a true lover of God. Like the great Raja Yogis of India, Jesus the Christ knew also "the secret of separating the soul from his physical shell, and showed this at the time of his death while his body was suffering from the extreme pain, by saying, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do'". The Swami at last says that it is through the teachings of Vedanta the Hindus have learned how to glorify the character of Jesus the Christ.

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय

## CHAPTER XVIII

### YOGA PSYCHOLOGY

The word 'Yoga' means the communion of the petty self with the higher universal Self, and 'psychology' is the science of the *psyche* or soul. Therefore, Yoga psychology signifies the science of unification of the lower self with the higher one, the union of the *jivatman* with the *Paramatman*, so to speak. The function of the psychology of Yoga is to prepare the mind, so as to catch a glimpse of the resplendent *Atman*, or to appreciate the real status and undying glory of the Absolute. The Yoga psychology of Patanjali discloses the secret of bringing under control the distracted modifications (*vruttis*) of the mind, and thus helps the aspirant to concentrate and meditate upon the transcendental *Atman*, which is the fountain head of knowledge, intelligence, and bliss.

Patanjali's Yoga aphorisms are called the Indian practical psychology, as they not only enunciate the laws and principles of controlling the mind, but also teach how to translate them into action. And so it is a perfect psychology as well as science. The *Atman* is the prime object of man's spiritual endeavour, and the Yoga system teaches how to reduce the mind substance into its simplest form, by the method of suppression (*nirodha*), which means to reduce the mind into consciousness (*chaitanya*). In fact, Patanjali and the commentator Vyasa have used the word '*nirodha*' (suppression) in the sense of transformation, i.e. transformation of the mind into consciousness. Swami Vivekananda, Swami Abhedananda, Sri Aurobindo and others are of the opinion that we cannot kill the mind, but can only transform it. We can transform the mind into its own nature, which is the pure consciousness. Swami Abhedananda has clearly stated it in his *Doctrine of Karma* (Cf. Appendix II). But the question is as to how to suppress (in the word of the *Yogasutra*) the mad rush of the mind or the mental modifications. Patanjali said that the mind can be restrained by practice and renunciation (*abhyasa* and *varagya*). The practice (*abhyasa*) means the repeated and sustained efforts (*yama*) for securing the state of



steadiness and calmness, and when steadiness is once attained, the mind goes back to its pure causal state, and is transformed into pure consciousness. Ramakrishna Paramahansa has said that the Brahman is beyond the limits of mind and intellect, but is reached by the pure mind ("*kintu shuddha maner gochara*") The mind is known by its positive and negative states of modification (*vrittis*) which are known as *samkalpa* and *vikalpa*. When the *vrittis*, *samkalpa* and *vikalpa*, are stilled or silenced, the mind shines in its own glory, i.e., shines as the pure consciousness, says Vedanta.

It is a fact that we in our individual life create everything through the mind. We desire to create, and that desire takes the form of an impression (*samskara*) which instigates the mind to act or to create, and by this process of creation, we mitigate all our cravings. Similarly, the cosmic mind, which is the sum total of all the individual minds and is known as *Isvara*, *Avyakta*, etc., which creates the world-appearance. Now, according to the strict logic of Advaita Vedanta, *Isvara* or *Avyakta* does not create the universe, as will-to-create (*sisriksha*) remains latent or unmanifested in *Isvara*, and it is the *Hiranyagarbha-Isvara* or the *Hiranyagarbha-Brahman* that creates the world-appearance. This *Hiranyagarbha-Brahman* is known in the *Puranas* as *Brahmā*, the Creator. The cosmic mind is generally known as the *Prakriti*, and in her womb the seed of creation or projection remains as unmanifested, and when she is intensified or rather motivated by the will-to-create, she begins to create the manifold universe. This *Prakriti* or *Visva-Prakriti* is the *Hiranyagarbha Brahman* of Advaita Vedanta. Advaita Vedanta has conceived two qualities-cum-adjuncts of determinateness and indeterminateness (*sagunatva* and *nirgunatva*), and says that the Brahman, which assumes the state of the fourth principle and transcends *maya*, is known as the indeterminate (*nirguna*) Brahman, and the determinate (*saguna*) Brahman is the assuming third principle, *Isvara* or *Avyakta* as well as the assuming second principle, *Hiranyagarbha*. Strictly speaking, the dual phase of the Brahman goes against the famous dictum of the non-dualistic Vedanta '*neha nanasti kinchana, \* \* ekamevadvitiyam*' (नेह नानास्ति किञ्चन, \*\* एकमेवाद्वितीयम्), i.e. there exists only the transcendental Essence which is one without the second. So the Absolute must be the one immutable (*kutastha*)

self-shining (*svayamjyoti*) Brahman Vedanta says that it is *maya* that makes the undivided unique Brahman immanent and transcendent,—determinate and indeterminate, as the moon appears in the current of the river as dual (*dvichandravat*) In truth, the Brahman is one and transcending but it appears as the ground and the cause of the changing world-appearance, coming in contact with the inscrutable *maya* or nescience

But the theory as advanced by the non-dualistic school of Vedanta, and the theory of the *Yogadarshana* of Patanjali as well as that of the *Sankhya* of Kapila, are quite different. So Sankara brands the Sankhyans and Yogins as dualists in his commentary on the *Brahmasutra*, II 13, He has said '*dvaitino hi te sankhya-yogascha natmakattva-darshinah*' (द्वैतिनो हि ते सांख्ययोगाश्च नात्मैकत्वदर्शिनः) i.e. the upholders of the *Sankhya* and *Yogadarshana* are not the believers in the non dualistic *Atman* or Brahman, they are known as the dualists. The contention of the Advaita Vedantists is that, though *samapatti* or *samadhi* may be attained by the absolute suppression and restraint of the modifications (*vrittis*) of the mind substance, yet nescience is not altogether destroyed by the process of suppression, but it exists in seed or causal form. So the upholders of the non-dualistic Vedanta, including Sankara, have clearly explained that *mukti* or knowledge of the Brahman is attained through deep meditation upon the *mahavakyas* of the *Upanishad* '*tattva-jnanam tu vedanta-vakyebhya eva bhavati*',—'*navedavin-manute tam vrihantam tam tvaupanishadam purusham pricchami*' ('तत्त्वज्ञानं तु 'वेदान्तवाक्येष्वेव एव भवति'—'नावेदविन्मनुते तं बृहन्तम्', तं त्वौपनिषदं पुरुषं पृच्छामि') and for this reason, Sankara refuted the theories of the Naiyayikas and the Mīmāṃsakaḥ, as well as those of the upholders of the *Sankhya* and *Yogadarshana* applying the merit of the *Upanishadic* dictum '*etena sankhya-smṛti-pratyakhyānena yoga-smṛtirāpi pratyakhyata drashtavyetyati-dishati*' (एतेन सांख्यस्मृतिप्रत्याख्यानानेन योगस्मृतिरपि प्रत्याख्याता द्रष्टव्येत्यतिदिशति)।

However, through the sincere practice of the Yoga, an aspirant of spiritual knowledge can control the vibrations of his or her mind substance, and can, therefore, concentrate on his or her chosen ideal and bring about perfect equilibrium between the matter and the spirit, between the phenomena and the noumena, that enables him or her to transform the mental stuff into the resplendent higher consciousness. This Yoga is

one of the disciplined methods of attaining spiritual illumination. The Vedantic method is a different one. So, when one follows the prescribed path of Raja Yoga, he or she must not compare it with that of Advaita Vedanta, as there are some fundamental differences between the two paths or methods. The practice of Yoga is useful and beneficial to the man or woman, who likes it and thinks it suitable for him or her. Ramakrishna Paramahansa has said that as one kind of food does not suit all the children of a family, so a particular discipline or method cannot suit all kinds of aspirants. So, while dealing with the practice of Yoga, it should be judged purely from the yogic standpoint, and not from that of *bhakti* or *jnana*.

Yoga', says Swami Abhedananda, in his *How to be a Yogi* 'is a Sanskrit word commonly used to signify the practical side of religion, and the first concern of the training for which it stands, is to enforce proper obedience to the laws of our moral and physical nature upon which depend the attainments of perfect health and moral and spiritual perfection'. There the Swami has enunciated eleven kinds of definition in favour of the word Yoga, and has divided it for the sincere students of Yoga into three main classes: first, those who are born Yogis, second, those who are born as half-awakened souls, and third, all those unawakened souls, who begin their search after truth and the practice of Yoga for the first time in their life. But aim and object of all kinds of aspirants are to attain a complete balance of the mind, and to use the purified mind as a means to the attainment of supra-mental consciousness.

The present volume is a compilation of the sixteen serial lectures on the *Practical Psychology* or the *Yoga Psychology*, delivered by Swami Abhedananda before a talented audience in America, in 1924. Fifteen lectures were systematically delivered in fifteen consecutive weeks, and as such this book is divided into fifteen chapters, covering the main theme. Another lecture on *Ego and Egoism*, delivered separately on some other occasion, has been appended to this volume, it being a topic of allied nature. It forms the last or the sixteenth chapter of the book.

The first chapter of the *Yoga Psychology* deals with 'Steps to attain Yoga'. There are four kinds of Yoga, and they are -

Raja Yoga, Jnana Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, and Karma Yoga. The word 'Yoga' connotes the idea of dexterity of practice, and the aim and object of the practice of Yoga are to attain to super-consciousness or *samadhi*, i.e., absorption of the *jivatman* into the *Paramatman*, the absolute Reality. Patanjali prescribed eight kinds of steps to reach the highest goal, and those eight steps (*astanga-marga*) are *yama*, *niyama*, *asana*, *pranayama*, *pratyahara*, *dharana*, *dhyana*, and *samadhi*. *Yama* includes non-killing, truthfulness, non-stealing, continence, and non-receiving of gifts. *Niyama* includes cleanliness, contentment, mortification, study and sitting posture, and Patanjali says that the easiest and comfortable posture of sitting is *asana*. 'स्थिरसुखमासनम्' ( २।४६ ) *Dharana* means holding up the divergent and active mind to some chosen object, and that means concentration. *Pranayama* means control of breath, which helps the practice of concentration. *Pratyahara* is making the mind introspective. *Dhyana* means meditation after quietening the active mind, and *Samadhi* is the absolute absorption of the mind or the state of superconsciousness. Swami Abhedananda has scientifically explained these eight practices of Yoga, and has said that when we study the Raja Yoga, we understand the wonderful powers of the mind which are latent in the subconscious level. The life-force is always healing and recuperating. It wants to manifest and overcome all the obstacles. We will have to go deep into the bottom of the mind, and there we will find that mind, intellect, intuition, and everything have their root in the all-consciousness *Atman*, which is immortal and everlasting, and the knowledge of which makes men free from the fetters of nescience (*ajnana*).

The second chapter deals with 'Obstacles to the Practice of Yoga'. Now, disease, mental laziness, doubt, cessation of calmness, false perception, non-attaining of concentration, and falling away from this state when obtained, are the obstacles of Yoga. The Swami has elaborately discussed these obstacles in a lucid way, and has said that constant practice of Yoga, and desirelessness remove all those obstacles, including other obstacles like grief, mental distress, tremor of body, irregular breathing, etc.

The third chapter deals with 'Remedy and Practice'. Swami Abhedananda has said that the mind stuff takes the form of

the object which we perceive with our senses. The impressions (*samskaras*) of the external object are gathered through the doors of our senses, and those impressions are stamped on the mind, which is called *chitta*. *Chitta* can be said to be a mental image of some object. The mind is finer matter in vibration. It vibrates all the time, and creates disturbances, brings suffering and pain. So the active state of the mind must be quietened by controlling the breath and also by concentrating and meditating. A Yogi wants to save all the energy for the higher purpose. He tries to save all his strength, and by saving energy and strength, he, in the end, succeeds in focussing all the energy and strength towards one object, and that object is the *Atman*, the Soul of our souls.

The Swami further says that we should be careful about our desires. The desires are never satisfied until and unless they are controlled, i.e., quietened, and when the desires are fully controlled or calmed, we attain to the state of concentration and meditation. So we should follow the instructions of the Raja Yoga, then our desires will be thin, and our life will be better. And we should remember that our highest goal of life is Godconsciousness, which is the ideal of Raja Yoga.

The fourth chapter begins with 'Science of Breath'. Swami Abhedananda has said that science of breath is *pranayama*. Now, what is *pranayama*? *Prana* means life-force, and *ayama* means control of the breath. The gross manifestation of the life-force of the physical body is the motion of the lungs. But to reach the more subtle, we must take the help of the grosser, and should go towards the most subtle, until we gain our point. The idea here is that *prana* or the life-force is invisible. We cannot get hold of it, but we know its outward manifestation in the form of inspiration and expiration. The first action of *prana* is expansion and contraction. That is the first motion of the life-force. That is universal. However, the aim of science of breath is to control *prana*, and to gain mastery over the organic activities and life-force or vital energy, which keeps us alive.

Now, the atomic energy, i.e., the energy that is in the atoms, is tremendous. Every atom is charged with *prana*, and this *prana* saturates and stimulates everything in this universe. So this *prana* should be controlled, and by which

it is controlled, it is known as *pranayama*. The method of *pranayama* brings everything in a systematic rhythm. It will bring harmony to our mind, and our organic functions will also be rhythmic. Give a knock at the door of our spirit and the answer will come in silence. The answer will be a revelation—an inspiration, and it will show us just the way that we are trying to get or wish to know. These are the most wonderful truths. These truths are revealed when the current of breath as well as the current of *prana* are controlled. Not only that, but *pranayama* or science of breath brings about that perfect state of realization.

The fifth chapter deals with 'Psychic Prana'. According to the Yogis, there are two nerve currents in the spinal column, called *ida* and *pingala*, and there is a hollow canal called *sushumna*, running through the spinal cord. At the lower end of the hollow is what the Yogis call the seat of Kundalini. The basic lotus or centre of energy is the *muladhara*, and the *Yogashastra* says that the coil-up static energy sleeps there in the form of a serpent. The serpent symbolizes the causal and concentrated psychic energy, the motion of which is crooked or spiral. When the Kundalini awakes, it tries to force a passage through the hollow canal of the *sushumna*, and the Yogis say that when it rises upward, step by step, all the psychic powers and visions come with it. Yoga and Tantra philosophies say that the current of psychic *prana* passes gradually through different centres of energy and reaches at last in the highest centre, the *sahasrara* or thousand-petted lotus, where shines the all-consciousness Siva or *Paramatman*, and then the final achievement or *mukti* is reached.

The idea of the Yogis can be understood very easily in the language of modern physiology. There are two sorts of actions in these currents—one is afferent and the other is efferent, one is centripetal and the other is centrifugal. One carries the sensations to the brain, and the other, from the brain to the outer body. The sensory nerves produce sensations, and the motor nerves produce activity. The nerves are the wires through which the sensation travels and the activity comes as the result. The Yogis try to transmute the physical forces into mental and intellectual forces, and then these forces can be transmuted into higher will-power and to other spiritual

forces Now, if we can generate a rhythmic action in all the organic functions by our will-power, we have gained control over all the organic functions, and that means our will-power is stronger than all the organic functions The will-power can be controlled, and if it is controlled, everything phenomenal, psychical and spiritual powers are attained and then final or absolute freedom is reached

The sixth chapter deals with 'Concentration' In this chapter, the Swami has said that we control the motion of the lungs which means we control our breath, and by controlling the breath we gain mastery over all organic functions, and when the organic functions are under control, the mind is at rest, is peaceful, and is concentrated on some object So the practice of science of breath, i.e., controlling of breath is regarded as an aid to concentration Therefore, everything which is discovered or invented, depends upon concentration Patanjali said that before the practice of concentration, we should practise *pratyahara* which means gathering force or energy The rays of the mental energy are scattered, going through the doors of our senses into the external universe So we will have to gather those scattered energies and focus them towards one point, and this method of focussing the energies towards one point or object is known as concentration or *dharana*

*Dharana* or concentration leads to *dhyana* or meditation. The uncontrolled mind is unbalanced, and is said to be a slave—slave to the appetites and desires of senses So you will have to detach the mind from the organs or senses which are only the instruments like the machine Just think that you are the soul, and your body and senses are the instruments which your soul has created through desires Develop and concentrate the power of the soul, and then you will be able to gather the scattered rays of the mental energy Naturally the mind runs away, slips out, and does not obey our commands The poet-philosophers of India have compared the restless mind with a drunken monkey, which is again stung by a scorpion Our mind, which is naturally restless, drinks the wine of self-pride and vanity Again, the mind is stung by a scorpion of jealousy and envy, and the demon of egoism has further come down and sits on the mind, when it is

finished. So it is very difficult to control the monkey-mind. So what is the remedy for controlling the mind?

The remedy is that you keep watch and let the mind run at its will. Do not lose sight of the mind, and watch where does it go, and if you watch the mind closely, you will find that it will not go very far. Gradually its flying nature will be checked and corrected, and it will at last take rest and will be concentrated. The constant watching on the mind is no other than the practice of controlling the mind, and this practice or *sadhana* will quieten the mind and will transform the mind into pure consciousness.

Patanjali said first about *dharana*, or concentration, then about *dhyana* or meditation, and then about *samadhi*, or superconsciousness. He said,

देशबन्धश्चित्तस्य धारणा ।३।१

तत्तत्प्रत्ययैकानताध्यानम् ।३।२

तदेवार्थमात्रनिर्भासं स्वरूपकृत्यमिव समाधि ।३।३

तपः स्वाध्यायेश्वरप्रणिधानानि क्रियायोगः ।२।१

The practice of holding of the mind on certain point or object (*dharana*) brings the state of concentration, and concentration brings *samadhi*. Some of the mystics or spiritual aspirants control their mind through love for God for emancipation (*mukti*). Now, if you fall in love with God, you will forget everything, physical and phenomenal, and that forgetfulness brings disinterestedness to phenomenal desires and sense-attachments, which again leads to calmness of mind and brings the state of meditation. So love and devotion are the things that help the seekers after Truth to get into the states of meditation and superconsciousness. Devotion means constant thought of the subject, and love means the feeling of oneness. So, through love and devotion, or by the practice of Yoga, you can attain *samadhi*, the absolute peace and happiness.

The seventh chapter is entirely devoted to the 'Practice of Meditation'. There are many obstacles in the way of attaining the state of meditation. So, we will have to proceed patiently towards the path of controlling the modifications (*vrittis*) of the mind or of quietening the onrush of the mind. When the mind is controlled, it is automatically



quietened, and is in tune with the pure consciousness in meditation and then comes absolute absorption into the state of *samadhi*.

The eighth chapter deals with the 'State of Superconsciousness' or *samadhi*. The ego is the *jivatman* or *prakriti*, which thinks I, me, and mine, and the *Purusha* is the spirit which is like a witness (*saksi*). In the state of *samadhi*, ego and spirit—object and subject—become one. There are two states of *samadhi*, *savikalpaka* or *saviya* or *samprajnata*, and *nirvikalpa*, or *nirviya*, or *asamprajnata*. In the *savikalpaka* state, there remains the duality of the subject and the object, and there you are conscious of the object, which is different from you, the subject, just as the flower is separate from yourself. In the *nirvikalpaka* state, there remains no sense of duality of the subject and the object, but that sense completely merges into the feeling of oneness or non-duality. Some advise to compare the state of *samadhi* with that of *sushupti* or deep sleep, but Swami Abhedananda says, that there is a difference between the two states, *samadhi* and *sushupti*. In the deep sleep state or *sushupti*, he says, 'you go down to your subconscious plane where the mind or intelligence (*manas* or *buddhi*) is fully covered by the *tamas* quality (*tamoguna*). It is inertia, dullness, and darkness, which suddenly come over the conscious brain \* \* but this kind of darkness, i.e., ignorance does not prevail in the superconscious state (*samadhi*). \* \* In the deep sleep, the consciousness or intelligence is fully covered by nescience (*avidya*), and the distinguishing or discriminating faculty remains unmanifested or dull. The superconscious state is quite different, because, though consciousness or pure intelligence is overpowered by the causal nescience (*karana-ajñana*) or *maya*, yet the self effulgent light of the pure consciousness reigns supreme in the superconscious state, \* \* Therefore, if you enter once into the state of superconsciousness (*samadhi*), you will be changed into a new man, possessed of divine knowledge or pure consciousness. And there lies the difference between the deep sleep state (*sushupti*), and the state of superconsciousness (*samadhi*)."

The ninth chapter deals with Kriya Yoga. Swami Abhedananda says that the method of Kriya Yoga is adopted in the practice of Yoga for overcoming the obstacles. Patanjali

said, तपः स्वाध्यापेश्वरप्रणिधानानि क्रियायोग १२।१

That is, mortification and surrendering fruits of work to God are called Kriya Yoga. Kriya Yoga is the same as Karma Yoga, which means the method of work or action. The word *kriya* is derived from the Sanskrit root verb *krī*, to act. From the same root word the English word 'create' is derived. So 'to create' originally means 'to act', and Kriya Yoga means Karma Yoga, or the method of work (selfless work). This method of work has beautifully been explained in the *Bhagavad Gita*, and there it has been said that every kind of work or action, good or bad, should be offered to God, and the result of such works should also be offered to Him.

Patanjali used the word *tapah* or mortification as a means to removing the obstacles (*kashaya*) to the practice of Yoga. Mortification, says the Swami, means those hardships or conditions which make us realize the ultimate Truth. The physical tendencies are naturally towards luxury and sensuous enjoyments. If we let the senses run wild, we go into troubles. So we shall have to restrain the tendencies of the senses to be the master of the senses. We are naturally the servant of the mind, and do everything with the dictations of the mind even against our conscience. So the mind should be restrained or controlled, and if the mind is brought under control, then we can stop the onrush of the mind i.e., tendencies of the mind, which run always towards material objects. *Tapah* or mortification helps men to control the mind and purifies the mind so as to concentrate mind on the supreme consciousness, and also makes our understanding clear for appreciating the right thing opposite to wrong ones. In the *Katha Upanishad*, it has been said,

आत्मानं रथिनं विद्धि शरीरं रथमेव च ।

बुद्धिन्तु सारथिं विद्धि मनः प्रग्रहमेव च ॥

That is, the organs are the horses, the mind is the reins, and the intellect is the charioteer. The master is the Self, who is sitting in the chariot. And from this, we know that the *Atman* is the rider, and the body is the chariot. So we should regard our body as the chariot, the senses as the horses, the roads as the objects of the senses, the *Atman* as the prime-mover of all these things, and intellect holds the reins of

the horses, the senses. Our prime goal is to attain Godconsciousness, and to reach that goal we need control over the senses. We need to fix our eyes towards the *Atman*, who is really the mover and master. Therefore, the real meaning of *tapah* or mortification is holding of the reins of the mind firmly, while guiding the body and the mind. It does not mean any torture, but it means curbing the desires, so that our intellect will take every step with proper understanding and knowledge, and proper reasoning and discrimination.

We require *svādhyāya* or proper study which signifies the practice of the sacred word OM or *Pranava*, and also the culture of those books which will help us to get the transcendental knowledge. General study brings *vāda* or argumentation, and not real decision or conclusion, but mere speculative thinking and intellectual pursuit and pleasure will not be able to unfasten the chain of *avidya*, so real study is necessary. *Shastras* are infinite and subjects to be known as innumerable— 'अनन्तशास्त्र बहुवेदितव्यम्'. So concentrate in a supreme subject which will help you to realize the *Atman*, and take the essential, and drop the non-essential parts, just as a swan drinks the milk and leaves the water 'इतो यथा क्षीरमिवाम्बु मयम्'. The essential part of knowledge is the knowledge of the *Atman* or Brahman, so by discrimination go beyond everything phenomenal and non essential, and sink deep into the ocean of transcendental knowledge of the *Atman*.

The next thing is to dedicate yourself and your everything to God, and then all actions in your life will be selfless, and your mind will be purified, and you will attain Godconsciousness.

The tenth chapter deals with 'Nescience and the World'. Swami Abhedananda says that nescience or *maya* itself is the world, so go beyond the five obstructions of Yoga, which are ignorance, egoism, attachment, aversion, and clinging to life. Nescience (*maya* or *ajñana*) is a negative mental state, and it is not real. Again the philosophers describe nescience as a positive one— 'किञ्चिदस्ति इति वदन्ति' \* \* and that positive existence of nescience is indefinable (*anirvachaniya*). Nescience is known as the undifferentiated consciousness or *Avyakta*. Though it is a positive state, yet it is unreal and is sublated by consciousness or *jñana*. The world is a

mere appearance, and though it *appears* as real for the time being, yet when right and divine knowledge comes, its apparent reality is replaced by permanent reality, and then the world becomes the playground of the Almighty

The eleventh chapter deals with 'Knowledge and Ignorance'. Swami Abhedananda says that knowledge and ignorance are quite opposite to each other, as darkness is opposite to light, or as matter is different from the Spirit. Knowledge may be divided into two, phenomenal and transcendental. Phenomenal knowledge is limited to phenomenal objects, so it is not permanent. The transcendental knowledge, or the knowledge of the *Atman* or Spirit, is permanent, but veil of ignorance covers this knowledge, so we do not realize it. Swami Abhedananda has said that ignorance means a state that causes delusion. "It is neither a positive, nor a negative, nor even a positive-negative state, but is an unspeakable (*anirvachaniya*) state that causes an erroneous effect, which is again sublimated by the right knowledge (*aparokshanubhuti*). The Self means the pure, effulgent, and ever blissful shining spirit, while the body is just the opposite." This ignorance can be removed by gaining correct or right knowledge of the immortal *Atman*. When the real knowledge comes, the true Self reigns in its own glory like the Divine Being. All this can be realized through proper concentration and meditation.

The twelfth chapter deals with 'Attachment and Aversion'. Patanjali says 'दुःखानुशायी राग' (२१८) and aversion is that which dwells on pain 'दुःखानुशायी द्वेष' (२१८). Swami Abhedananda says that these two things should be avoided, i.e., be transcended.

Let us remember the ideas of Satan in Christian religion, and Mara in Buddhist religion. Both the words convey the idea of temptation or desire. Mara, who tried to tempt Tathagata Buddha, was the personified desires. So Buddha controlled Mara for getting perfect bliss of Nirvana. Nirvana does neither mean any place, nor void or nothingness, but it means perfect existence, divine knowledge, and immortal bliss. Swami Abhedananda has given references of *viritti*, *chitta*, *dharana*, and *dhyana* from the *Patanjalidarshana* (II 10, 11, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40), and has said that the Yogi's

mind, thus meditating, becomes undisturbed by both the atomci (*anu*) and the infinite (*mahat*) Our mind will be restful, our body will be peaceful, and we will rise above all the vibrations of evil, and all knots of desires and bondage will be removed

The thirteenth chapter deals with 'Bondage and Freedom' The clinging to body or life is a kind of bondage So we must learn to overcome this, and also learn to overcome the fear of death Meditation is another method of controlling the mind, and that controlled mind can overcome both attachment to life and fear of death Meditation means concentration upon an object, or holding of the mind on one subject, which would last for a certain length of time without disturbance, and the current of thought will flow towards that object in an unbroken manner, just as a flow of oil when poured from one vessel to another, is in a stream without any break When our mind or thought-current flows towards the chosen object in an unbroken manner for a certain length of time, it is called meditation or *dhyana* Meditation brings perfection or a state where there is no sorrow, no suffering, no disease, and no fear of death, and that state is eternal and unchangeable, nay, that is the *Atman* Perfect freedom comes with the attainment of the immortal knowledge of the *Atman*

The fourteenth chapter deals with 'Karma and meditation' Swami Abhedananda says, that our ordinary vision is always on the surface, so we cannot unlock the mystery of work (*karma-rahasya*) Our *karmas* are meant only for getting some objects which will fulfil our desires, but those objects are limited and phenomenal and so they cannot give us eternal happiness and absolute freedom Concentration and meditation can only give us the achievement of permanent peace and absolute freedom So we must adopt the practice of Yoga The Yoga psychology states that all kinds of disharmony and disbalance happen for *karma* If *karma* is selfish, it brings bondage, and if *karma* is performed in the spirit of worship, it brings freedom So *karma* should be regulated to the right path, and for that purpose, i.e., for bringing or restoring power to regulate, the practice of meditation is necessary

The fifteenth chapter deals with 'Attainment of the Super-consciousness' Swami Abhedananda says that the breathing

exercise is helpful to quietning the modifications of the mind and the nerve-centres. Concentration leads to meditation, and when meditation is deep, it is called superconscious state or *samadhi*. Swami Abhedananda has already compared *samadhi* with *sushupti* or dreamless deep sleep, and shown their difference. There are some developed souls who remain absorbed in Nature, and they are known as the *prakritilina purushas*. They have not reached perfection, but with their causal bodies they remain in the womb of the *Prakriti*. As waking, dream, and deep sleep (*jagat*, *svapna*, and *sushupti*) are the three states, so gross, subtle and causal (*sthula*, *sukshma*, and *karana*) are the three states in the mental and physical planes. The causal state is like a seed form, and the developed individuals (*purushas*) remain absorbed in the causal state which is known as the primordial Energy. The Yogis consider those individuals, absorbed in Nature, as neither highest, nor perfect. Patanjali said भवप्रत्ययो बिदेहप्रकृतिख्यानाम् (१।१७) that is, 'when *samadhi* is not followed by extreme non-attachment, it becomes the cause of re-manifestation of the gods, and of those who become absorbed in Nature'. Vachaspati Mishra said that those who remain in any of these elements like *prakriti*, *mahat*, *ahamkara*, and *tanmatras* after dissolution of their material bodies, are known as the *prakritilina-purushas*, and those who attain the *samprajnata-samadhi* in any of the greater elements (*mahabhutas*), or subtlest senses (*sukshma-indriyas*) and remain absorbed in them, even after dissolution of their material bodies, are called the *videhalaya-purushas*. Vachaspati Mishra condemned these states, and said that emancipation from ignorance and attainment of absolute knowledge are desirable for all. Even the state of God, the Creator, is inferior to the state of superconsciousness or Brahman-knowledge. Swami Abhedananda has elaborately discussed the state and function of God in this chapter, and has said that all the limitations of qualifications and adjuncts should be removed from God, otherwise God will be considered as a mortal man. In fact, He should be thought of as impersonally personal, because He is beyond our conception of personality.

The sixteenth chapter deals with 'Mystic, Word and God-consciousness'. The mystic all-pervading word is OM. It is

the Logos of Heraclitus, and Philo Judia. The neo-Platonists called the Logos as the only begotten Son of God. Swami Abhedananda has historically discussed about the Logos theory which was prevalent among the Platonists, Stoics, Jews, Christians, and Roman Catholics. Then he describes beautifully the Indian philosophical ideas that is contained in the mystic word OM or *Pranava*. He explains that the word OM consists of three sounds A U M. When these three sounds or letters coalesced, they sound like two letters. The first basic sound is represented by the position of the mouth, when it is wide open. By opening the mouth we produce the guttural sound A, and it is the first sound. The last sound is produced when we close our mouth completely. The M sound is produced by the lips, and the A sound by the throat. The larynx and the palate must be kept all wide open. Then between these two sounds we get the whole gamut of sounds. So, all sounds that can be produced by all living beings are included in this all-inclusive sound OM.

Patanjali said in his *Yogadarshana* तस्य वाचकं प्रणवः i.e. *Pranava* or OM is the indicator or discloser of the mystery of the indeterminate Brahman, so *Pranava* can be taken as the determinate Brahman. Patanjali further said 'तज्जपस्तदर्थभावनम्' i.e., 'the repetition of this OM and meditating on its meaning is the way'. The *Yogashastra* said that if we repeat a few times the mystic syllable OM, the whole vibration will be changed, and we shall be uplifted. Our mind will be concentrated, and we shall be in direct communion with the cosmic Being. For counting the syllable of *Pranava* or any *mantra* of a deity, we use rosary, which, Swami Abhedananda says, the Roman Catholics have exploited. These ideas had originated in India, long before the Roman Catholics adopted them, and travelled through the Buddhist priests and missionaries, who went to Palestine two hundred years before Christ, and introduced all these ideas.

Further the Swami explains "Why do we count the rosary and repeat the formula? The idea is already here. The repetition of any sacred letter or *mantram* is necessary to have a mental habit, and it is an aid to mental concentration."

The book *Yoga Psychology* contains an Appendix on 'Ego-

and Egoism' Swami Abhedananda says that consciousness of distinction between I and not-I is what we call 'egoism', and the true nature of the ego is the Spirit or *Atman* (ordinarily 'ego' suggests the idea of limited self or *jivatman*), which, like a witness, beholds the instruments of understanding (*buddhi*). The Yoga psychology teaches that when we rise above the limitation of senses, we transcend the reign of *maya*, and then we also rise above ego and egoism, and attain to perfect freedom.



## CHAPTER XIX

### YOGA, ITS THEORY AND PRACTICE

The book, *Yoga, Its Theory and Practice* contains nine illuminating lectures on Yoga, delivered sometimes between 1901 and 1915, in America. Three books of the Swami on Yoga, dealing with psychology, sciences and philosophy, were published before under the titles of *How to be a Yogi*, *Yoga Psychology*, and *True Psychology*.

*Yoga, Its Theory and Practice* has been dealt with the system of Yoga showing its utility and importance in the practical life of men. The Swami is of the opinion that until and unless science, or philosophy, or psychology, or any other subject of knowledge, is applied in the practical life, they are useless. So Yoga must be studied, learnt, and practised for the practical use of human life.

The first chapter of this book deals with the aphorisms of the Raja Yoga and their importance. The aphorisms explain the constitution and nature of the mind, the modifications of the mind as well as the scientific methods of controlling them. In Sanskrit, mind is known as the *manas*, and Swami Abhedananda has compared it with an ocean with a vast sheet of water. When it remains calm, it is known as the mind, and when it is agitated by the wind of desires and passions, it takes the form of different modifications (*vrittis*). The modifications are known as the modal consciousness, as they import some kinds of partial knowledge about something. In Vedanta, the tranquil, calm, and balanced state of the mind is known as the *Antahkarana* or the internal organ, though some of the Vedantists do not admit it as an organ (*indriya*). Vedanta says that when the *Antahkarana* is tinged with different objects, it takes the forms of them. The same *Antahkarana* again functions in four different ways of doubting or thinking discriminating or determining, reflecting or remembering, and self-conceiting in the forms of *manas*, *chitta*, *buddhi*, and *ahamkara*, as the same primordial energy or *Prakriti* manifests as the qualities of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. It is commonly or rather

erroneously believed that the four *vrittis*, or the modal forms, constitute the stuff of the *Antahkarana* (in the Western psychology and philosophy, the *Antahkarana* is commonly known by the word, mind), but, in reality, those psychic forms are the manifestations of the same *Antahkarana*. The desires and passions are the cause of the disturbance of the mind ocean. The desires and passions disturb the balance, or the state of equilibrium, of the mind substance, and create sorrows and sufferings in the life. The practice of Yoga controls the mind, and brings balance in the mind, and causes the mind to be concentrated upon some desired thing and thus prepares the ground of meditation as well as of the attainment of the super-conscious state or *samadhi*, in which the individual soul finds its permanent consolation and peace, and attains to the God consciousness.

The aphorisms of *Yogasutra* of Patanjali explain and describe many things about the mind and its functions, and teaches us the means and methods of suppressing (*nirodha*) the modifications of the mind. The ways of bringing the mind to its simplest form, or to its causal state, and to transform it into its real form, are no other than revealing of the self shining consciousness (*chit*). So the function of Yoga is very important and useful. Swami Abhedananda says that there are different kinds of method of practising Yoga, and mainly they are known as the Raja Yoga, the Bhakti Yoga, the Karma Yoga and the Jnana Yoga. These are regarded as different paths towards the same goal which is no other than the realization of the *Atman*, and different Sadhakas select them and practise them according to their tastes and likings. As different rivers, coming down from the same snowy mountain, run in different ways, and fall at last in the same ocean, so different practices of Yoga lead the different Sadhakas towards one and the same goal, and enable them to reach the same universal ocean of the Absolute.

Swami Abhedananda says that Raja Yoga is regarded as the 'royal road' or the best and highest method. It teaches the methodical or systematic practices of Yoga which lead to the ultimate goal of the human beings. It teaches the gradual method in practice, by which a Sadhaka reaches the state of concentration through the *pranayama* or controlling of

the breath or *prana*, and from concentration he reaches to meditation, and from meditation to the superconscious state or *samadhi*, the ultimate goal of the yogic *sadhana*. The Swami says that by the practice of Raja Yoga when a Sadhaka dives deep into the ocean of meditation, his mind is absorbed in that ocean like the salt-doll, and is transformed into the pure consciousness and becomes one with the *Atman* in the *samadhi*.

The second chapter deals with the Practice of Yoga. Swami Abhedananda says that those who practise Raja Yoga with its proper knowledge of science and theory as well as of psychology and philosophy, gain sound health and perfect mind along with the living inspiration of entering into the states of concentration and meditation which prepare the ground of entering into the superconscious state. It has been explained that there happens the divine communion of the *jivatman* with the *Paramatman*, where a Sadhaka realizes the oneness with the *Atman*, or the Brahman. But Sankara criticised the yogic idea of oneness, and said that in the yogic idea of oneness there remains a duality in a causal form, whereas in the advaita vedantic *sadhana*, a Sadhaka realizes the *Atman* as one without the second, and there remains no duality which is no other than the nescience or *maya*, and for that reason Sankara called the followers of the *Sankhya* and the *Nyaya* as the dualist (cf the commentaries on the *Vedanta-sutras*, *yakta* or *tarka-pāda*). But viewing from the standpoint of Yoga or the yogic *sadhana*, one should reduce his mind to its simplest form, and should concentrate it on the *Atman*, and then through meditation, he will attain ultimately to the state of *samadhi*, and will reach perfection.

In the third chapter, Swami Abhedananda has explained the importance and value of the correct breathing. Here controlling the breath means to conserve the vital energy or life-force, which enables one to enter into the supreme state of *samadhi* and to realize the *Atman*.

In the fourth chapter, the Swami deals with culture and knowledge of the healing power of the breath or *prana*. When the *prana* is controlled or balanced, one acquires some psychic powers (*siddhis*) which bring success in the material plane. Swami Abhedananda says that Patanjali regarded

these powers as the obstacles. These obstacles obstruct the path of spiritual illumination, and entangle men in the den of delusion. So the Swami warns all the followers of Yoga and also all the seekers after the highest Truth not to run after the trivial psychic powers which delude and always mislead, but to dive deep into the blissful state of the super-consciousness, where a Sadhaka attains to the *atmanana*.

In the sixth chapter, the Swami has described about different methods of *pranayama*. The word *pranayama* connotes the idea of controlling (*ayama*) the breath (*prana*, or the vital energy). When a Sadhaka sufficiently conserves his energy or vital-force in him, he is able to gain the power of concentration, and concentration gradually brings unto him the state of meditation and then *samadhi*, where he finds the real value of his life, and realizes the supreme Soul. It should be mentioned in this connection that the practice of *pranayama* is not indispensable in the Advaita Vedantic *sadhana*, which advocates the practices of *shravana*, *manana* and *nididhyasana*. This *shravana* is not merely the hearing of the *mahavakyas*, but it is accompanied with, or supported by, the acts of discrimination (*viveka*) and ratiocination (*vichara*). The supporters of the Vivarana School advocate that *shravana* alone can realize the absolute Brahman, because, according to them, this *shravana* goes along with the act of ratiocination or the *Brahma-vichara*, and so *manana* and *nididhyasana* are not necessary there, and it is a fact, say the Advaita Vedantists, that in the practices of *shravana* alone, the mind is completely controlled and balanced, and is concentrated upon the cherished object, the *Atman*, is purified, and is transformed into pure consciousness. Besides the Vedantic *sadhana*, the mind is controlled and concentrated in the yogic *sadhana* too without the help of the *pranayama*, as the function of controlling the breath or *pranayama* is automatically goes on at that time. So it will not be correct to think that concentration and meditation are the result, or the product, of the act of *pranayama*, because if anyone practises concentration and meditation without taking the help of *pranayama*, his breath or *prana* is also suspended or controlled and well-balanced. It is a law of nature that as the mind is distracted and divergent when the breath or respiration is rapid and irregular, so, when the mind remains

very active, or is engaged in different objects, the breath or the respiration is also rapid and irregular, because the activities of both the mind and the breath are inter-connected together. So Swami Abhedananda says that those who are inclined to practise Yoga for attaining to perfection, follow the process of *pranayama*, and when their mind is sufficiently controlled and balanced and silenced, they enter into the state of concentration (*dharana*), and when their concentration is ripe and deep, they enter into the state of meditation (*dhyana*), and when their meditation is well-accomplished, they attain to the state of the superconsciousness (*samadhi*), which is the ultimate goal of the yogic *sadhana*. It has been said before that in the superconscious state, the individual soul (*jivatman*) communes with the cosmic Soul (*Paramatman*).

In the seventh chapter, Swami Abhedananda has beautifully discussed about the meaning of the universal word or sound, *Pranava*, which is commonly known as OM. The Swami says that the word or sound, OM is constituted out of the three unifying letters, A-U-M, that represent the states of *jagrat* (waking), *svapna* (sleep) and *sushupti* (deep sleep) as well as the stages, gross (*sthula*), subtle (*sukshma*) and causal (*karana*). The *Mundaka* and the *Mandukya Upanishad* have beautifully explained these states. The *Atman*, or the Brahman, is beyond all these stages or states of attainment. The universal word or sound, OM includes all words, letters, and sounds of the universe, and it is the pointer, indicator, or discloser, of the indeterminate (*nirguna*) Brahman "*tasya vachakah pranava*", and so Vedanta calls this sacred universal sound, OM as the determinate (*saguna*) Brahman, as it determines the indeterminate Brahman, which cannot be expressed by word, deed and thought. Now, though the Sadhakas aim at the absolute Brahman, yet they begin their vedantic and yogic *sadhana*s from the determinate Brahman, or through some mediums, because the determinate Brahman, or the symbol, or the medium, can be thought of, can be meditated upon, and can be taken as a means to an end. The grammarians and the musicologists call this OM as the Sabda brahman, or the Sphota, from which all the letters, words and thoughts and everything phenomenal world evolved. The Tantrikas call it the *mundamala*, composed of fifty heads or letters. How-

ever, the *Yogashastra* calls this OM (*Pranava*) as the sign or symbol (*pratika*) as it indicates, directs or determines the absolute Brahman, which is beyond thought, speech, and words. The intention of the *Yogashastra* is that the *Sadhakas* shall reach the formlessness through the medium of the form

Swami Abhedananda has elsewhere said "So long as the devotee thinks of God with a form and believes that He is outside of the soul and of the universe, he makes a mental picture of Him and worships the divine Ideal through the form, or he may keep before him some symbolic figure like the cross which remind him of the Ideal at the time of devotion \* \* As *bhakta* gradually approaches God, he rises above such dualistic conceptions and realizes that his Beloved is not only transcendent, but is also immanent in nature, that nature is His body, and that He dwells everywhere \* \* The *bhakta*, then, reaches that state which is called qualified non-dualism" And from the state of qualified non-dualism the *bhakta* gradually reaches the state of non-dualism or Advaita (cf. Swami Abhedananda *How to be a Yogi*, the Bhakti Yoga) Patanjali prescribed the symbol (*vachaka*), *Pranava* as a means to reach the end, the transcendental *Atman*. So Swami Abhedananda has said to scientifically study and meditate upon the sacred word or sound, OM

In the eighth chapter that deals with Concentration, Swami Abhedananda's discussions are remarkable and unique. There the Swami says that when our mind is controlled and concentrated upon a cherished object, we withdraw our mind i.e., the divergent modifications of the mind from the organs of the senses. The different organs of the senses have different portions in the brain, where they view certain sensations. There is a self-conscious entity which is known as 'personality', and that entity really translates every molecular changes that happen in the brain in the form of vibrations. The modern scientists have described these changes as the states of consciousness. This consciousness is recognized as the light that illumines all objects in this universe. But if we try to know what consciousness is, we cannot do it, because consciousness cannot be an object of knowledge, or if we try to know consciousness, we know it by the help of consciousness. Again existence is inseparable from consciousness, as we exist and our

existence depends on our consciousness. Further it is a fact that there is no second consciousness by which we can understand the nature of our own consciousness. Therefore, consciousness is unique and one, and this one consciousness manifests as sensations, conceptions, emotions, feelings, and knowledge. In other words, the expansion of the range of consciousness discloses all kinds of knowledge, sensation, and experience.

Now, from this it is understood that there is a common principle, of which consciousness and existence are the two inseparable manifestations or phases, and this common principle is the *Atman*, or the Soul. The Western philosophers like Kant, Hegel, Schelling, Fichte, Nietzsche, and others have admitted the inseparability of consciousness and existence, but have missed to discover the fountain-head of them. Vedanta philosophy and Yoga psychology of India have been able to find out that missing link of the Western philosophers, and have said that the all-knowledge and all-intelligence *Atman* is the source of consciousness and existence. So Vedanta philosophy and Yoga psychology have instructed all the seekers after truth to concentrate and meditate upon the *Atman*, and when the mind loses its separate existence and dissolves into the ocean of the *Atman*-knowledge, all things in this universe are known to the realized souls "*yasmīn vyanate sarva-vyanatam bhavati*". For that reason, Yoga psychology have specially given stress upon the practices of concentration and meditation, and has said that through the practice of Yoga one can control and calm down his mind, and can transform the mind into the pure consciousness, and can realize the *Atman* as non-different from his own being.

The ninth or the last chapter has been devoted to the discussion on the Superconscious State and Its Obstacles. Swami Abhedananda says that *samadhi* means the tranquil state of the mind, where the conscious mind is in abeyance, and the *Atman* saturates the conscious plane, and manifests its own glorious nature (*svarupa*). *Samadhi* has been divided by Patanjali into two broad divisions, *sahaja* and *nirbija*, *savitarka* and *nirvitarka*, *savichara* and *nirvichara*, *savikalpa* and *nirvikalpa* and *samprajnata* and *asamprajnata*. The *savitarka* and *nirvitarka* as well

as the *savichara* and *nirvichara samadhis* are accomplished with the gross (*sthula*) and the subtle (*sukshma*) objects and are included in the category of the *sabya* or *samprajnata samadhi* (*'ta eva sabyah samadhi'* 91, 46) The commentator, Vyasa said 'ता श्वत्त्र समापत्तयो बहिर्वस्तुबीजा इति समाधिरपि सवीज, तत्र स्थूलेऽर्थे सवितर्क निर्वितर्क, सूक्ष्मेऽर्थे सविचार निर्विचार इति चतुर्था उपसंख्यात, समाधिरिति' i.e. When the *nirvitarka* or the *nirvichara samadhi* is ripe and matured, then the *asamprajnata-samadhi* is accomplished 'निर्विचारवैशारद्योऽध्यात्मप्रसाद' \* \* (147) Then there arises the *ritambhara-prajna* (148), by which the Sadhaka determines the real nature of the *Atman*. The *asamprajnata-samadhi* is the *nirbija-samadhi*, where there remains no *bija* or *samskara* (impressions of any kind), and it is called the *mukti* or freedom, according to Yoga Patanjali said 'तस्यापि निरोधे सर्वनिरोधात् निर्वीज समाधि' \* \* (151), and Vyasa commented upon this 151 *sutra* as '\* \* निरोधजः संस्कारः समाधियान् संस्कारान् वाधते इति \* \* संस्कारैश्चितं विनिवर्तते तस्मिन्निवृत्ते पुरुषः स्वस्वप्रतिष्ठ अतः शुद्धो मुक्तः ईत्युच्यते'।

Here '*nirrodha*' means the complete destruction of the impressions (*samskaras*). The seed (*bija*) means the impression which causes the soul to reincarnate again and again. The words '*purushah svaruppratishtah*' mean that the individual soul realizes then his real sublime nature, and comes to know that he is not entangled in the trap of *maya*, but is free forever and ever.

Swami Abhedananda says that when an individual soul realizes the perfect oneness, he feels himself as the universal Soul in the state of *samadhi*. But before reaching the state of *samadhi* or the superconscious state, every seeker after Truth shall have to pass through some steps or states, and these steps or states really take or lead to the final step or goal. But, in the path of *sadhana*, there are many obstacles which was described by Patanjali. Patanjali called these obstacles as '*yogamalas*' or '*antarāyas*'. The Swami has said that all these obstacles can be removed very easily by the constant thinking, "because what thou thinkest, shalt become, and it is as true as that I am sitting here. What we are today, is the result of our own thoughts. We have made ourselves what we are, and what we have brought ourselves to this plane of existence \* \* The moment we begin to know better, we live on a higher



plane" But we should remember that most of the Sadhakas are enchanted with the charms of the *siddhis* or *libhuts*, achieved through the practice of Yoga, and most of them also fail to attain to the highest goal for the obstacles in the path of the practices of Yoga. Diseases like physical and mental laziness, mental distress, disappointment, doubt, cessation of calmness, false perception, non-attaining of concentration, grief, weakness, etc are the obstacles and obstructions to the path of *samadhi* (cf '*Patanjala-darshana* 130-31) and Swami Abhedananda says that these obstacles can be studied carefully, and should be removed for getting the spiritual illumination, permanent peace and tranquil happiness. It is a fact that when all the obstructions are conquered, the result would be a perfect concentration. Perfect concentration will lead to meditation, and meditation will lead to superconscious realization. Then we shall be able to know our immortal and true nature, that exists in our spiritual Self. Therefore, the practice of Yoga is necessary to remove the bondage of nescience (*ajnana*) and to simultaneously realize the *Atman* which is the *summum bonum* of human life.

## CHAPTER XX

### TRUE PSYCHOLOGY

*True Psychology* was first published in 1946 as the second contribution to the *Abhedananda Memorial Series*. It contains nine illuminating lectures on Indian Yoga psychology, which were serially delivered by Swami Abhedananda in America in 1920, before the selected American talents. The lectures created a great sensation and absorbing interest among the psychologists and philosophers of America, and the lectures appeared to them something new and novel. The psychologists of the West mainly deal with the problems of the mind and its modifications, and do not generally admit the existence of the soul as separate from the mind substance. So they were surprised, when they heard about the theory and function of Indian psychology from the Swami, who was well versed in both the Western and Eastern psychology. They came to know that there is an entity, separate from the mind and the body, and that entity forms the background of the mind. They came to know that the all-intelligent and all-knowing soul is the prime mover of the mind, and the mind becomes inert and motionless without the help of the self-shining soul. So the then leading psychologists as well as the philosophers of America were much interested in the learned lectures, delivered by Swami Abhedananda, and some of them also admitted True psychology as the real science of the mind and its modifications.

It should be mentioned in this connection that Swami Abhedananda delivered the lectures on True psychology, which were no other than the fundamental principles of the Yoga psychology of Patanjali. The Swami's observations and arguments in the book on True psychology are logical, critical and analytical. He has refuted all the materialistic theories of the soul, namely, combination theory, production theory, etc., as advanced by the eminent scholars like Prof. Percival Lowell, J. Luys, Herbert Spencer, Prof. Clifford, G. J. Romanes, Dr. Wiggs, Dr. Thomson, and others. Swami Abhedananda has pointed out all the flaws of all the materialistic thinkers, and has said that they have done a great mistake in accepting the

mind as the soul, because the mind and the soul are fundamentally different from each other. In truth, the soul is the mover and director of the mind, and mind is the instrument of the soul. So the Western psychologists failed to prove psychology as the science of the *psyche* or soul, and that means they deal only with the science of the psycheless psychology. The Swami has raised many knotty points and problems of psychology, and have faced them with strong and logical arguments, together with scientific explanations and solid conclusions in favour of the transcendental non-dualistic viewpoint of Vedanta.

Hundreds and thousands of savants of the West studied the mind and its phenomena for a long time, and tried to solve the mystery of the mental world. But, as a matter of fact, no definite conclusion has been reached by them. Their methods of study and investigations were different from one another on account of their different ways of approach and appreciation, so they created different schools of psychology with different new and novel doctrines. Some different schools of psychology came into being in the eighteenth-nineteenth century, when savants like John Stuart Mill, Bain, Lotze, Hamilton, and others appeared with their respective contributions to the field of research, and enriched the domain of the psychological thought. Prof. John Stuart Mill insisted on the necessity of the actual empirical study of the process of association. Prof. Bain laid stress upon the doctrine of 'psycho-physical parallelism', and though his psychology was tempered by the admission of mental activity and spontaneity, yet it was balanced by the laws of contiguity and similarity, recognizing the importance of conation and movement that gave rise to sensation and explained the phenomenological aspect of the will.

Prof. Hermann Lotze developed the theory of 'local signs', and made a synthetic treatment of detailed and intimate relationship between the mind and the nervous system. After Lotze, appeared Profs. Miller, Helmholtz, Weber, Fechner, Elliotson, Esdaile, Brail, and others. Prof. Helmholtz's theories of sensation and sense-psychology and especially the theory of vision were famous, though he sponsored substantially the Young's theory of the colour vision. Dr. Murphy said that Prof. Helmholtz's work on acoustics was as substantial and noteworthy

as his work on topics His work, *On the Sensations of Tone as a Physiological basis for the Theory of Music*, opened a new vista both in the fields of analytical psychology and history of music

After Helmholtz, the German experimentalist Herings appeared with his specific contributions to the working principles of psychology as a science, which are worth mentioning Prof Herings contributed several aspects of sensory physiology, including problems of temperature of sense and optics He was celebrated chiefly for his theory of colour, with which he opposed the theory of Helmholtz He introduced some improved experimental methods for the study of such phenomena as contrast, after image, and colour-blindness in the periphery of the retina His theory afterwards underwent many revisions and changes, but yet many other new evolutionary theories evolved out of his novel theory, and the Ladd-Franklin theory is one of them

Profs Elliston, Esdaile, and Brial were credited for their theories of hypnotism and abnormal psychology After them Profs Darwin and Spencer appeared with their novel discovery on the evolution theory Profs Weismaun, Lamarck, Fabre, Jacques Loeb, Theorndike, and others made further new experiments on the animal psychology Sir Francis Galton pointed out a new way to an individual psychology on an experimental basis Profs Shunn and Stanley Hall's experiments on the child and social psychology were worth-mentioning after them The systematic form of psychology gradually evolved with Prots Lipps, Hoffding, Kulpe, James Ward, Stout, and others, and Prof Fechner approached with his psycho-physic law in the field of psychology The study of experimental psychology began from Prof Wilhelm Wundt, and it as gradually developed by Profs Ebbinghaus, and G E Muller Prof Wundt's pupils Cattell, Hall, Kraepelin, Munsterberg and Dr Scripture made some successful expansions, and contributed their novel theses and thus made attempt for the popularization of psychology In 1870, the development of 'abnormal psychology' began in France by Profs Charcot, Alfred Binet, and others Experiments were going on constantly, and new discoveries were made in the field of physiological psychology Profs Broca, Wernicke, Flouren, Goltz, Munk, Luciani, and others, also brought some

new changes in the field of psychology by subscribing their learned contributions on that subject

Then we find the advent of modern psychology and other schools of thought of conflicting ideas between *structural* and *functional* aspects of psychology. The disciples of Profs Kulpe and Wurzburg made experimental studies specially on *thought* and *will*. Profs Wertheimer, Rignano, Spearman, Kohler, and Koffka also made researches on the doctrine of configurationism or *Gestalt*. Prof Husserl's *Phenomenology* played an important role in the new movement of psychology. That movement also laid a prominent stress upon the field of perception, though it was extended to the spheres of behaviour (human and animal), learning and intelligence, and made also excursions into the domain of psychology, biology and physics.

The animal experiments of the *Gestalt* school were carried out on apes and other animals. Dr Murphy said "Eagerly prosecuting such studies of higher mental processes, Max Wertheimer and two of his experimental subjects Wolfgang Kohler, and Kurt Koffka came upon a radically different way of viewing the whole problem. It was Wertheimer's formulation of what occurred that led Frankfurt in 1912 to the formal inauguration of the *Gestalt* psychology—the psychology of form." Prof Spearman said regarding the *Gestalt* psychology that mind is creative in its nature, and it creates new mental content according to the three qualitative laws of 'apprehension of experience', 'education of relations', and 'education of correlates'. The new school of the *Gestalt* psychology proved on one side a valuable counter-weight to *Behaviourism*, and on the other, brought a revolt against the traditional psychology.

After *Gestalt* psychology, Prof Kurt Lewin's investigations into the 'field theory' and 'social psychology' are worth-mentioning. "Lewin's influence on social psychology", said Dr Murphy, "is huge, on child psychology very large, and on general theoretical psychology considerable". In fact, Lewinian experiments gave "the field theory the vitality, and productiveness is achieved".

The growth of biological sciences in the nineteenth century was something like a struggle between the physical conception and the developmental conception. Profs Bechterev,

Pavlov, and Watson, mainly worked on the doctrine of *Behaviourism*. The rise of the behaviouristic thought was, in a sense, a protest against the *Gestalt* school, or as Dr. Murphy said that "the enthusiasm over Watson's behaviourism as system was a factor challenging all his opponents to discover a counter-system which had the same vitality". When this new doctrine first appeared, "it seemed a lonely island, but like all such islands, physical and intellectual, it proved to have many relatives, both visible and in hiding". Prof. Watson decided to throw overboard the entire concept of the mind or consciousness, so as to make both animal and human psychology a subject of study of behaviour. He emphasized "the right of the behaviourist to think of 'mental processes as *internal* forms of behaviour, the relation of language to thought being especially stressed. Indeed, one of Watson's most important theoretical contributions is the *suggestion*, and, as time elapsed, the insistence that all the phenomena of 'inner' life are, in reality, the functioning of mechanisms which are as objective, though not as observable as gross muscular contractions. In particular, imagination and thought have been stated in terms of 'implicit' muscular behaviour, especially the behaviour of the speech organs and other mechanisms which symbolize lines of overt conduct. The study of language is, therefore, of paramount importance for the formulation of behaviourist theory."

Prof. McDougall said that the behaviouristic psychology is the positive science of conduct of living creatures. Prof. Pillsbury defined it as the science of behaviour, and it is to be studied through the consciousness of the individual and also by external observation. Regarding this school, he said "The most important avenue of approach to *behaviourism*, however, was through animal psychology, where introspection in terms of consciousness is bound to be precarious". Swami Abhedananda has dealt also on the theory of behaviouristic school in his discussion on the mind and its modification in a beautiful manner (vide Chapter V). Swami Abhedananda says "Modern behaviouristic psychology may be called a phase of the anatomy of the nervous system and also of the cerebral hemispheres. After vivisectioning the brains of frogs, pigeons, sheep, and monkeys, and dissecting the human brains, they have traced the grand terminus of the nerves in the grey matter or the

cortex of the brain, which is supposed to be the seat of the mind" However, both the behaviouristic and modern schools of psychology explained everything by automatic reflex actions of the brain It is also a fact that the doctrine of *behaviourism* laid stress first on the nervous system and physical organism and then on the subjective mind

Gradually the conditioned-response method of psychology came into process "to be widely applied to human psychology with profound consequence for psychological theory, both within and without the behaviourist movement" Prof Lashley demonstrated that the conditioned salivary reflex could be elicited in human beings through the sight of chocolate candy, a small cup against the parotid gland collecting qualities of saliva which varied with the nearness of the stimulus At the same time there began a movement in the field of neurology and brain psychology, and this movement was, in truth, an experiment in the province of modern physiological psychology Prof Franz, Holmes, Sherrington, and other talented scholars were the pioneering psychologists of that modern school In the twentieth century, Prof McDougall appeared with his *harmic* psychology, and proved that "a realization of the role of instinct is all important for the understanding of behaviour Instincts are hereditarily determined channels for the discharge of nervous energy—they are psycho-physical dispositions"

Prof Sigmund Freud appeared with his new doctrine of psycho-analysis, and laid stress upon the mystery of the unconscious or subconscious He was occupying himself in the late seventies with such orthodox medical investigations as the embryology of the nervous system He made contact with Prof Breuer, who was engaged in the study of hysteria and kindred complaints Shortly thereafter he went to study with Prof Charcot at Paris and finishing his study he returned to his practice in Vienna, and collaborated further with Breuer Afterwards he proceeded to develop a new method—the psycho-analytic method Gradually he stood squarely for his original thesis that sexuality, in its various aspects, is the central problem of all life and all adjustment He divided the mind into three main parts, the (conscious) *ego*, the *Id* (the unconscious reservoir of instinctual urges), and the *super-ego* (the moral elements) He regarded dreams as the expressions of

wishes. He said "The dream is a dynamic expression of forces which, though repressed, are struggling to regain a place in consciousness." In dream, instinctual tendencies, in conflict with the *ego*, are manifested. The *ego* is a group of tendencies which have been strengthened by social—especially ethical indoctrination. He published his thesis on the theory of wit, and expounded strongly the *libido* theory. In fact, the theory of sexuality was fundamental in the Freudian psycho-analysis. His pupils Profs. Adler and Jung differed from him in attributing less importance to sexual factors. "Rejecting root and branch of the entire Freudian conception of basic masculine and feminine psychology, Adler pointed out to the fact that biological differentiation is relatively unimportant, until it has been exploited for the purpose of Power." Profs. Erich Fromm and Karen Horney also contributed their new theses on the psycho-analytic process with some new changes and modifications. Freud's sexual factors were then seen in a new vision, and for this change or modification, Profs. Adler and Jung were mainly credited. Adler's departure from Freud, said Prof. McDougall, "takes the form of restriction and elimination of much that in psycho-analysis was considered essential. Jung's revolt made use of the opposite method of extension. Thus, the *libido*, which in the psycho-analytic sense meant the sum total of the 'component instincts' entering into the sexual urge, means in Analytical Psychology the sum total of all impulses—the equivalent of Bergson's *élan vital*."

Prof. A. G. Tansley made an experiment on *New Psychology*, which considers the human mind as a highly evolved organism. The *New Psychology* obtains its material from the whole field of mental life, normal and abnormal, from external observation, from introspection, from the study of behaviour and conduct, from mythology, and history, from the habits and customs of primitive peoples, and from those of the most advanced civilization. Dr. E. W. Scripture of the Yale University made substantial research on the *New Psychology* long before Prof. Tansley (in 1897), and said that his thesis on *New Psychology* was not a brain psychology, not a spiritualism, and not even a new kind of metaphysics, but was mainly based on the fundamental ideas of science and methods of careful experiment in psychology. The province of *New Psychology*,



therefore, deals with the methods of systematized observation, statistics, measurement, experimenting, standards of time, standards of space, and sources of new science. But, truly speaking, the *New Psychology* may be considered as 'an utterly new method of investigation or a starting principle of mental life', as it cannot dissect the innermost core of the mind, nor can it discover the real status of the soul or *Atman*, which is the prime mover of all the organism of the animals as well as of all the systems of the world. And not only the *New Psychology*, but also all the schools of the Western psychology practically failed to unveil the mystery of the soul, and their failure was due to the fact that their investigations proceeded from the centre to the circumference. The cause of their failure, says Swami Abhedananda, is simply because the soul is beyond the reach of the senses, and the aim of the Western psychology is only to know the nature and depth of the mind, and not to transcend the limits of the mind. But the soul or *Atman* is absolutely the supra-mental essence, and, therefore, cannot be reached by the methods sought to be evolved and employed by the Western psychologists, who are concerned only with the problem or mystery of the mind.

Swami Abhedananda says that mind and *psyche* or soul cannot be included in the same category, as mind borrows its shining light from the all-intelligent soul. According to Vedanta, mind has been considered as an internal organ (*antahkarana*), and is subject to change for its manifold modifications (*vrutis*). It is limited by the adjuncts (*upadhis*) of time and space, which are the essential categories of the contingent phenomenal world. But the Indian *psyche* or soul is absolutely raised from the limiting adjuncts of time, space and causation.

It has already been said that Western psychology is mainly concerned with the problem of the mind, and does not recognise the mind as the intelligent *psyche*. But the attitude of the Indian psychology or the Yoga system of Patanjali is quite different. Indian psychology teaches to bring control over the mind and to come in contact with the pure consciousness. Indian psychology or True psychology says *yogachitta-vritti-nirodhan*', i.e., the Yoga connotes the idea of suppression of the modification of the mind'. Here the word *suppression* can

be taken as an act of *purification* or *transformation*. The mind, in both Vedanta and Yoga, is known by its modifications like *samkalpa* (positive willing) and *vikalpa* (negative willing), and when these modifications are controlled or calmed, the mind shines as the pure consciousness (*chit*). It becomes then the pure *psyche* or *Atman*. The Western psychology has not gone so far as to consider the mind as the all intelligent *Atman*. So Swami Abhedananda calls the Western psychology as the *psycheless* psychology, i.e., psychology which does not recognise the existence of the *psyche* or soul as the background of the mind.

To make this idea more explicit, Swami Abhedananda says that Western psychology teaches psychology not in the sense of science of the *psyche* or soul, but in the sense of physiological origin and ordering of the mind. In his lectures on *Ideal of Education*, the Swami has stated that in the West, 'there is psychology without a *psyche*, which means the soul. There is the study of psychology, but the existence of a *psyche* is not admitted, but the Hindu psychology is far better'. 'The Hindu psychology is "the Yoga system of Patanjali". \* \* There is no other system of psychological psychology in the world so complete as the psychology of Patanjali. The modern psychology of Europe, strictly speaking, is not true kind of psychology, because it does not admit the existence of *psyche*, the soul, as Schopenhauer says *The study of psychology is vain, for there is no people*. It may be called the physiological psychology or *sometology*'. The Swami has also dealt on this theory in his monumental book, *India and Her People* (p. 29).

The Swami further adds "True psychology recognizes the existence of body, mind, and soul. \* \* But the modern physiological psychology admits the existence of body only, and nothing else. True psychology tells us that what we call the physical body, is the dwelling house of the soul. It is manufactured by the soul which is the source of intelligence and self-consciousness'. It has already been said that body and mind are the instruments of the soul, and they are, therefore, controlled by their prime mover, the soul. The higher soul or *Atman* is permanent, and it does not suffer the degrees or changes like increase and decrease, beginning and end, outside and inside, evolution and involution. Such is also the conten-

tion of Prof F H Bradley, though he admitted degrees of truth and reality or of the Absolute on the basis of temporal facts. While discussing degrees of truth and reality in his book, *Appearance and Reality* (Chapter XXIV), he said "The Absolute, considered as such, has of course no degrees, for it is perfect, and there can be no more or less in perfection (Chapter XX). Such predicates belong to, and having a meaning only in the world of appearance." But still the status of the Absolute, as maintained by Prof Bradley, is not free from criticism. Vedanta says that the soul or the Absolute is the quintessence of man's spiritual *sadhana*, and is the highest achievement of the human progress.

Swami Abhedananda says that we should know and realize what the true nature of the soul is, and that we should also ascertain our relationship with the Absolute. The *psyche* is the pure ego or individuality 'which is not a thought, not a function of the mind, not a function of our intellect, not a sensation, not a percept or a concept, but which is the unifying element of all and which makes each one of them related to us'. So the soul or *psyche* is not the mind, not a state of the mind, or not a faculty of the brain, but is the pure consciousness itself—'*svaprakasha chaitanya*'.

It should be remembered that pure consciousness is not produced from and not illumined by any other thing, but it is self-illumined and self-contained (*svayam-prakasha* and *vastutantra*). All other things, material and mental, are illumined by the soul. So the Swami says in this connection "Suppose you say that matter has produced consciousness. That would be an idea or a conception, and that means a state of consciousness, a state of the mind. It does not say that you have gone behind the consciousness to find out its source. We can only find out the source of a thing, by going beyond it, by transcending it, and by going behind it. But can we go behind the state of consciousness?" No, we cannot go even behind the consciousness, because consciousness is the ground and prime source of all kinds of knowledge, and so we cannot leave it, and cannot transcend it. Again "when we are studying our states of consciousness, the very act of studying the states means we are ourselves the new states of consciousness. So we are not going behind the states of consciousness, and we cannot

find the source of consciousness, because we have it, we cannot leave it, we are one with it" In fact, the pure consciousness is not an entity, separate from our being and individuality, but it is our abiding reality, in which we move, live and have our being So "these states of consciousness, when properly understood, will help us to understand our relation to the infinite or the infinite existence, which is beyond time, beyond space, beyond causality, and which is the Absolute"

This statement of Swami Abhedananda fully agrees with the conclusions of the modern science, psychology, and philosophy By 'consciousness', he means 'the recognition of the subject and the object as one and the same' He says that consciousness is not the motion, but is that which gives us the knowledge of motion So he differentiates consciousness from knowledge He says that knowledge comes by comparison, which is the function of reason, but consciousness is not the result of the function of thought or reason He further differentiates consciousness from understanding, illusion, delusion and hallucination, and considers consciousness as the fundamental, as well as the substratum of all the modal consciousness (*viritti-qnana*)

Some of the great scientists of the nineteenth century have subscribed to this similar view Scientist like Prof Max Plank admitted the same truth, when he said in one of his lectures in 1931 "Consciousness, I regard as fundamental I regard matter as derivative from consciousness We cannot get behind consciousness Everything that we talk about everything that we regard as existing, postulates consciousness" The renowned Indian philosopher Dr Hiralal Halder also said in connection with Lord Haldane's philosophy 'Do what we may, we cannot go behind knowledge itself', because Reality lies as the foundational character of knowledge

Swami Abhedananda further deals with the problems of existence, God, religion, Absolute, apperception of the Absolute (*brahmanubhuti*), etc He says "In the midst of all changes, the only thing that does not change, is existence" This existence or *sat* or *sattva* is not the spatiotemporal impermanent existence, but is permanent, immutable, intelligent, and eternal Although it appears somewhat like Immanuel Kant's matter that 'suffers no change amidst all the

changes of the appearance, yet it is different from that matter, because Kant believed in an existence of a permanent substance like matter, but yet he identified this permanent substance that represents time in consciousness with matter. So Kant matter, as a permanent substance, fails to transcend the limitations of time and space, and is, therefore, impermanent and phenomenal.

Kant said that Thing-in-itself (*Ding-an-sich*) can be apprehended by thought or mind, but its real essence remains for ever unknown and unknowable. He observed "It (Thing-in-itself) cannot be known at all, it can only be conceived or thought." But Kant's statement about the realization of the Absolute appears contradictory, because a thing is known as well as unknown at the same time, which is illogical and absurd. If a thing is known or revealed by the light of knowledge, it cannot be said to be unknown. For this reason, Prof. Hoffding and Dr. Otto Pfleiderer criticized Kant's position. Prof. Hoffding said that Kant's unknown and unknowable Thing-in-itself 'is itself in the grip of becoming, of evolution, it may possibly suffer changes.' Dr. Pfleiderer was also of the same opinion, while he said 'He (Kant) himself is still too deeply sunk in sceptical empiricism and dogmatic mystical dualism.' From the standpoint of non-dualistic Vedanta, Kant's view, regarding the realization of the Thing-in-itself, is also subject to criticism. Because non-dualistic Vedanta maintains that if for a moment there dawns the light of realization upon a man, he is at once turned to a man of realization. So, if the Absolute is known or realized, it is known for ever and ever. So Kant's statement about the unknown and unknowable Absolute seems to be anomalous. Swami Abhedananda states in the chapter VIII of this book "A room that has held darkness for thousands of years, a cave where darkness has been for thousands of years, is instantly illumined by the stroke of a match stick—the darkness of thousands of years is dispelled."

In this way, if we compare the status of the Absolute, as maintained by Spinoza, Bradley, Hegel, and others, we shall find that they also fall short of their fullness. As for example, Bradley's transcendental Absolute is no other than the 'undifferentiated unity' of Spinoza, and for that reason, Prof.

Pringle-Pattison criticized Bradley as the neo-Spinozist. Prof. Ruggero also called Bradley as a veiled sceptist, because Bradley maintained the philosophical doctrine of absolute idealism, that reduces the Absolute into the high watermark of the neo-Hegelian thought. Prof. Bradley's vision of Reality is like a harmonious undivided whole of experience in which all aspects of infinite experience are included and transmuted, but not parted and related, and, therefore, Bradley's Absolute resembles the Hegelian Absolute, which appears as a unique undivided whole, but contains in it the duality of transmuted everything other than it. The Indian Vedantic viewpoint is clear in this respect. The non-dualistic Vedanta stated that the absolute Brahman is one without the second, and is unique and universal, and is raised from all dualities. The Brahman can only be realized in an ecstasy of unutterable feeling or experience (*anubhuti*). "It is the feeling. It is the realization, the divine realization", says Swami Abhedananda. "And this realization does not involve any intellectual process of thought of the Ideal, but the Ideal is harmonized with our daily life".

Swami Abhedananda further says that existence and consciousness are one and the same. The *Upanishad* has described the Brahman as *sat-chit-ananda*,—existence, consciousness and bliss. This existence or changeless absolute *sattva* underlies all the changing phenomenal existence. So the changeless existence can be said to be the basic existence or basic consciousness. Philosopher Hume called it an unceasing eternal stream of existence or consciousness, as the Buddhist Madhyamika philosophers have designated consciousness as the fleeting one (*chalamāna jāna-sāntana*). But Kant gave a death blow to Hume, and roused him from his dogmatic slumber, by proving that there is something permanent amidst all the impermanent things. But Prof. Kemp Smith even criticized the permanent something, as maintained by Kant, because Kant's persisting something also represents time in consciousness with matter. Here Swami Abhedananda's stand is quite firm and faultless. The Swami says that the real existence (*kutastha satta*) is raised from all tints of time, space and causation, and is the changeless immutable substratum, upon which all the materials of the changing phenomena take their shelter,

play their role, and at last disappear. So the pure existence is like the bed of the river, upon which the restless streams of the water pass. The Swami's statement or rather conclusion has given, therefore, a death-blow not only to the passing consciousness of Hume and the Madhyamika philosophers, but also to the perpetual change or aimless time-flux of Heraclitus, Bergson, and S. Alexander as well as to the primal vortex of the Greek philosopher, Empedocles and Anaxagoras. Swami Abhedananda states that Vedanta clearly maintains that pure existence is the self-revealing (*svayamprakasha*) permanent essence that dispels darkness of all duality and delusion, and brings immediate awareness of the Absolute.

Again the Swami has differentiated Intuition and intellect, and says that "intellect is one of the powers of the mind, but intuition is just the other pole of reason, that is, knowing without conscious reasoning." In truth, intuition is "that power by which our subjective mind can perceive the result without reasoning, without questioning. In this respect, Swami's view is different from that of Immanuel Kant, because the Swami has raised the status of intuition above all kinds of sensuous tinge, whereas Kant made his intuition sensuous and phenomenal. In fact, the Swami maintains the Advaitic viewpoint of Indian philosophy as regards intuition.

Swami Abhedananda further deals with the problem of the mental functions like attention and concentration. He says "Of course, concentration, in its simplest form, is known as attention, but modern physiological psychology does not explain what attention is." Concentration means the act of controlling the energy or the modification of the mind, and will-power plays an important rôle in that act of controlling. Attention and will-power are again inseparably connected, and they develop the power of one-pointedness of the mind, and thus bring the power of concentration or concentrated attention unto a man. By concentration, men acquire right knowledge, revelation, inspiration, and realization, which are the disclosures of the higher self.

Swami Abhedananda has further discussed the questions of *individuality* and *personality* in a very logical and novel way. He says that among the writers of higher thought and even

among the philosophers, you will find that the word 'personality' has been used in the sense of individuality, and the word 'individuality' in the sense of personality. But personality may change, and may be diverse, whereas individuality never changes, but is constant, and permanent. The philosopher like Hegel also overlooked the real status of individuality, as he maintained that individuality being the false self separates us from it, whereas personality being the true self, unites us. The Swami refutes this view of Hegel from the Indian Advaitic viewpoint, and proves that individuality is basic and permanent, whereas personality is impermanent.

According to Tantra philosophy, Siva is the changeless static energy, whereas Sakti is the dynamic one. Sakti as Kali dances upon the breast of Siva Mahakala, and it means that the dynamic play of the divine energy takes its ground (*adhisthanam*) upon the static unmanifested energy. Ramakrishna Paramahansa has said that the moving serpent (*chala mana sap*) and the motionless (*sthira sap*) are essentially one and the same thing, because motion is the manifested phase of the motionless unmanifested one. The *Sankhya* philosophy also maintained the same view. The *Sankhya* stated that the dynamic phase of the *Purusha* is no other than *Prakriti*, as the *Prakriti* itself is inert and motionless, and becomes dynamic, being contaminated with the all-intelligent *Purusha*.

As regards the Absolute, Swami Abhedananda has said that the Absolute is the immutable permanent reality. It is our very existence and essence. It can be realized by our deeper experience or feeling. Some of the Western philosophers like Spinoza, Schelling, Hegel, Lotze, Bradley, and others, believe in the intellectual apprehension of the Absolute. They said that through the transparent mirror of intellect or thought the transcendental luminosity can be fully grasped. Kant also maintained the similar view, as he says that to catch the glimpse of the Noumenon, pure intellect is necessary. But Swami Abhedananda flatly refutes this view of Kant as well as of these other philosophers, and has said that the Absolute can be realized only by the divine feeling (*anubhuti*) and not by thought or intellect.

Swami Abhedananda has further said that divinity in man is the higher consciousness, and it is the one stupendous whole



that knows no part, division, or degree. It transcends also the denominations of *one* and *many*, because *one* and *many* are the forms of thought, and, therefore, they are inadequate to express the transcendental nature of the Absolute. It can, therefore, be described by the negative thought like *neti, neti*—not this, not this. Some are of the opinion that transcendence implies an idea that the Absolute being transcended from the world, becomes unconscious and blank. The Swami says that this apprehension is incorrect. The absolute Brahman, being intelligence and consciousness in itself, cannot be blank or void. So, when the Brahman is transcended, it transcends the limitations of time, space and causation. In essence it shines always in its full luminosity and surpassing glory.

The leading American idealist Prof J Royce and some other neo-Hegelian thinkers maintained a quite different view, regarding God's qualities or denominations. Prof Royce was of the opinion 'God cannot be *one* except by being *many*. Nor can we various selves be *many* unless in Him we are one'. From this it appears that God, according to Royce, shines somewhat like the 'higher synthesis' of Hegel and the inclusive whole of prof. Whitehead. But Swami Abhedananda has refuted both the views of 'one-in-man' of Hegel and the 'united pluralism' of Whitehead. The Swami has also proved that though God or the Absolute shines in and through the world of becoming, yet it is free from the discrepancies of *one* and *many*.

Swami Abhedananda considers the Absolute as the back-grounds (*adhisthana*) of the world, so long the world remains as separate from the Brahman. Regarding it, he says "The only thing that does not pass away, is the Absolute, and that Absolute is like the background of all phenomena. It is the substratum. Plato has made the 'Ideas' the ground of the world of sense, but he did not consider it as cause. Spinoza also recognized the Substance as the ground or substratum of the modes, thought and extension, but he refused to accept it as the cause of them. But the Swami has recognized the Absolute as both material and efficient cause (*upadana* and *nimitta karana*) of the world of appearance, and there he has maintained the Absolute viewpoint of Sankara. In fact, the *urupadhika* and *nirvishesha* Brahman is known as the cause

(*karana*) and the substratum (*adhishthana*) of the world from the standpoint of projection or *srishhti* only, but, in essence (*svarupa*), it is neither the cause nor the substratum, but transcends the ideas of both cause and ground. Regarding it, the Swami says 'The term cause' can be applied to a thing, when it is related to the effect, and from this standpoint the causeless cause or uncaused cause is also an anomalous term. It does not refer to the Absolute'. God, the *sopadhika* Brahman may only be regarded as the cause and the ground of the world.

Thus we see that Swami Abhedananda's philosophical viewpoint, throughout his discourses on the True psychology, is free from the doctrine of dualism, qualified non-dualism, monism, and even from that of immanent transcendentalism, as it imbibes the air of transcendentalism or the transcendental non-dualism of the Vedānta. But yet the Swami does not deny the apparent value and reality of the empirical world like Sankara and Kant, rather he admits the apparent existence (*vyavaharika-satta*) of the world of appearance. He negates it only in the transcendental ultimate Reality. In the highest apprehension of the Absolute (*brahma-sakshatkara*), the permanent existence (*paramarthika satta*) of the Brahman is realized, and that is the only reality.

Swami Abhedananda says that selfishness is the cause of ignorance or nescience (*ajnana*). It "is ignorance that makes us selfish, but the light of knowledge will dispel the darkness of ignorance". He also discussed about religion. He has said that religion is the means or medium for achieving the knowledge of the Absolute. Doctrines and dogmas are the non-essential parts of religion, whereas the realization of the Absolute is the essential part of it. The attainment of God-intuition is the true religion, and that God-intuition means to see God face to face, and to realize God as the innermost essence of the world. (God is used here in the sense of the transcending Brahman). Swami Abhedananda has denied the doctrine of the eternal progress for the achievement of the highest goal, as Herbert Spencer and other evolutionists maintain. Regarding it, he says "We are evolving and progressing everyday, until we reach the goal which is the idea. Before we understand what the Absolute is, we must pass through the

different stages of evolution in our spiritual progress, but, in truth, the grades of evolution are the forms of thought or imagination

The Swami maintains that every man, nay, every creature will commune with God sooner or later, and his communion means to be one with God the Absolute. The American philosopher, Boodin somewhat differed from this view. Prof. Boodin was of the opinion that God is both transcendent and immanent.

He is immanent in His activity, in His pervasiveness and control, but He is transcendent in quality with reference to nature and evolution, as nothing rises equal to the quality of God. And 'to have communion with God it is not necessary to be God. To commune with light it is not necessary to be light. But in the communion with God, we live God as we are able. The kingdom of heaven is always at hand. But to live God absolutely means to have the quality of divinity.' From this it is clear that Prof. Boodin believed in the doctrine of qualified monism (*visishtadvaitavada*), and, therefore, he differed from the doctrine of non-dualism or Advaita, as maintained by Sankara, Vivekananda and Abhedananda. Swami Abhedananda has said that being and becoming are one, and a man realizes the Absolute, means he becomes one with the Absolute.

Being a man of realization, Swami Abhedananda does not forget to turn his benignant eyes even towards the suffering and wailing millions of the world with his unbounded love and sympathy. He pines for their solace and relief. He says:

'So, we must not live for ourselves, but we must live for the rest of the universe. We are here to help in the onward progress, not only for our own individual self, but of the whole humanity, of the whole race and of all living things.' So, we see that Swami's love for his people, and love for his nation and country, nay, love for the freedom of the whole humanity, are intense and burning, and this has been vividly expressed in his *India and Her People*, delivered under the auspices of the Brooklyn Institute in America in 1906. His, had no selfish anxiety for his own emancipation or *mukti*, but he comes down to the common ground of his fellow beings, and even to the so-called down-trodden animal and plant-world, and thus appeals to all. "We must not stop simply after doing

something that will help our own people and our own nation, but we must go on doing things that will help not only our own nation, but also all nations, not only the human beings, but also all the living creatures, lower animals, even plants' How great and all-embracing was the heart of the beloved child of Sir Ramakrishna! He has received his spiritual training and knowledge at the holy feet of his great Master, Ramakrishna, and so it was possible for him to make his philosophy and religion quite living, loving, and practical!

The book has been re-edited for the Complete Works. The book is a unique contribution to the field of philosophy, and specially to the domain of psychology. Most of the scholars generally go deep into the study of the Western psychology, and neglect the valuable teachings of Indian Yoga psychology. Yoga psychology, has many things to contribute in the field of psychology, which are very essential to all who live in this world of activities and struggle for existence for making their life worthy and fruitful.

## II

Regarding 'True Psychology' Swami Abhedananda says that it relates to our own self, i.e., to our own being. Generally in schools, colleges, and universities, psychology is taught as a natural science. The word 'psychology' has been derived from the Greek word *psyche* which means 'soul', and thus we use this word *psychology*, not in the sense of science of the soul, but in the sense of physiological origin and ordering of the mind stuff. Psychology in the sense of physiological psychology is hopeless, because it says that sensation and states of consciousness are nothing but the brain activities, and there is no other thing behind them. Analytical psychology, neutral psychology, and history of psychology—all these are based on materialistic or quasi-materialistic foundation. True psychology, on the other hand, is that which consists of systematization and classification of truths, relating to the soul or self-conscious entity which thinks, feels, and knows, nay, is the foundation of all activities, physical and mental.

True psychology teaches that the soul (*psyche*) does not die, and cannot be destroyed. It is immortal and eternal, and it is the fountain-head of mind, intellect, knowledge or consciousness. True psychology explains all the psychic phenomena, all truths in connection with spiritism. True psychology has been taught in India from very ancient times in the name of Hindu psychology, which was elaborately and beautifully explained by Patanjali in the pre-Christian era. True psychology says *buddhi* is not only the reflected consciousness or reasoning faculty, but also the faculty of intuition which is nearer to soul or *psyche*, the pure consciousness.

In the second chapter, Swami Abhedananda deals with the problems of 'Consciousness'. He discusses in this chapter some theories like *production theory*, *materialistic theory*, and *combination theory*. *Production theory* teaches us that mind, thought, intelligence, consciousness, or whatever we may call it, is produced by the nervous system and the brain. The theory further says that "the sensations are like things which, when entering into our brain, are metamorphosed into thoughts and ideas, just as, in the same way, when we eat something, the food-stuff is metamorphosed, i.e., the food-stuff, after entering into our system, goes through a chemical change, so all the sensations, falling into the instrument of brain, are changed into thoughts, ideas, emotions, volitions, and so on." The *materialistic theory* also explains consciousness or knowledge as the by-product of matter, and the materialists like Percival Lowell, J. Luys, and even Herbert Spencer are the upholders of *production theory*, which is no other than *materialistic theory*. The *combination theory*, on the other hand, says that consciousness is a complex thing, made up of elements and a stream of feelings, so there are two lines, running parallel: one is the neutral current, and the other is the stream of states of consciousness. But all these theories fail to explain the real thing behind thought, or idea, or emotion, or consciousness, rather they hover round the truth, and cannot disclose the truth. True psychology says that consciousness is a constant thing, and continuity of consciousness can never be broken, and we cannot think that this will go into nothingness.

The Swami has said that consciousness is the knowledge

of a primary kind. It is not the knowledge of particulars. It is the procedure that knowledge of the primary things comes first, and then comes knowledge of the particulars. In fact, consciousness is a kind of knowledge, which gives the foundation of all our knowing states. It is the ground or substratum. So, in the truest sense, consciousness is not *knowledge*, as knowledge comes by comparison, being a function of reason. And consciousness means the establishment of relations between the subject and the object, and it is instantaneous. Consciousness is, therefore, different from *understanding*. Similarly, illusion, delusion, or hallucination is not consciousness. Again, consciousness is not motion, but consciousness is that which gives us the knowledge of motion. Then, what is consciousness? Consciousness can be said to be the *recognition* which means, as Prof. Whitehead said, is an awareness of sameness.

"The whole universe is like a gigantic magnet, and the law of potentiality produces mind and matter from the same thing. In fact, there is one substance in the universe, which is neither mind, nor matter." And that substance is the *Atman*, which knows no limiting adjuncts of time, space, and causation. In this vast ocean of the universe, we notice the rhythm of action and reaction, which we call the law of *karma*, or the law of evolution and involution (*sristi* and *pralayaya*). The play of action and reaction really creates the mystery of the universe.

The individual soul can know or realize God, or the Absolute, because the soul is potentially God or the Absolute. The potentiality of the whole is there in the soul, and, therefore, the individual soul realizes the whole. It also explains unity and variety. It also explains the relation between monism and dualism. That is, *monism*, when one looks at the neutral point of the magnet, and that time, he does not see the positive end and the negative end,—spirit and matter. But *dualism* would admit the positive end, and the negative end, without paying attention to the neutral point. "So, neither *monism*, nor *dualism*, is correct, because they are only different standards as we interpret." There are different states of consciousness, which are known as subconsciousness, consciousness, and super-consciousness. The subconscious-

ness is the vast field, because impression of hundreds and thousands of past incarnations, and also of present incarnations lie buried below the threshold of it. The conscious state is the crest of the waves of impressions, where some impressions are materialized and play their roll, and the super-conscious state is the highest, which transcends the limitation of time and space, and goes beyond the causality. So, it is the greatest and highest. It is also called the God-consciousness.

Then Swami Abhedananda deals with the 'Powers of the Mind' in the third chapter. The Swami says that the waves of power of the mind are manifested in different forms of psychic forces like *hypnotism*, *thought-transference* or *telepathy*, *clairvoyance*, *thought-reading* etc. These powers of the mind are recognized by Patanjali, as *siddhis* or *abhutis*, which are eight in number. These powers enchant men in the delusive world, and take away from the path of God-realization. So, the Yogis do not desire to have them, they think them as the gems scattered on the courtyards of Chintamani, the absolute Reality. Swami Abhedananda advises us to shun them and to dive deep into the ocean of immortal *Atman*.

The Swami discussed about the 'Mind and its Modifications' in the fourth chapter. He explained first the behaviouristic school of psychology of the West, and also explains the modern trend of thoughts of the modern psychologists, who try to explain everything by the automatic *reflex actions* of the brain. The Swami further explains *reflex action* as well as the *theory of automatism*. He explains how sensations come by suggestions and become apperception or perceptions or conceptions, according to the modern psychology. He further writes about *aphasia*, *emotion*, *instinct*, *desire*, and *intuition*, etc. Now, there are the modifications of the mind. *Intuition* is the last thing, which means to look upon. It is a direct sensing of something. It seems like *instinct*, but there is a difference between *intuition* and *instinct*. The Swami says "It is an *instinct* in the lower animals, and it is called an *intuition* in the human beings." An *instinct* is, again, the result of a habit, or of the repeated previous experiences, whereas an *intuition* is that power, by which our subjective mind can perceive the result without any reasoning and ques-

tioning. An *intellect* is also a power of the mind, but an *intuition* is just the other pole of the intellect or reason, and it is knowing without any conscious reasoning. Now, the mind and its modifications are governed by different laws, and those laws are governed by the soul.

The Swami then explains 'Power of Concentration' in the fifth chapter, and he said that the power of concentration is immense to quieten the modifications of the mind. The Hindu psychologists have divided the mental conditions into five parts, *kshipta* or scattered, *mudha* or stupid, *vikshipta* or divergent, *ekagra* or one-pointed and *niruddha* or concentrated and calmed. By the *abhyāsa-yoga*, all divergent modifications are brought into one channel and one point, and when it is absolutely quieted, it shines as pure consciousness.

The sixth chapter deals with 'Individuality and Personality'. Swami Abhedananda says that the words *me* and *I* make up our personality. The word *me* refers to something that is objective and that *I* know, and *I* refers to something that knows. So, *me* and *I* are partially the object and partially up our *personality*. There is another one which is *social personality*, i.e., personality that refers to the social side—the subject, and the combination of these two, *me* and *I* makes our social position and honour, and that is our social *me* in ourselves. Again, there is a *spiritual personality*, i.e., personality that refers to spiritual side. When we go to a temple or church, when we visit a holy shrine, we have our spiritual self very prominent, and that is our spiritual *me* in ourselves. So, when we analyze ourselves, we find that the personality of ourselves is the sum total of all these feelings, thoughts, passions, desires, and everything that come up in our conscious being.

"Each individual is a bundle of sensations or thoughts or be regarded as a stream of the continuous states or units, one following the other. But amidst this flux or continuous ideas. The bundle of sensations or thoughts or ideas may take change in flows of water, there is an unchangeable stream. Some of the Buddhist thinkers like the *kshanika-vijnanavadins* say that everything in this universe being all the time changing, is momentary, and there is no permanent entity. But there are other thinkers who admit an unchanging substance



amidst the continual changes In the West, David Hume denied the existence of a permanent soul or ego as a separate entity amidst the stream of sensations, and thus he carried his psychology and philosophy to absolute nihilism like the Buddhist *madhyamika* school of thought The German philosophers, Kant, Fichte, and others refuted the nihilistic theory of Hume, and said that thoughts or flying sensations are the products of thinking or sensing, and there must be a thinking or sensing principle or ego which thinks or senses, and the product of thinking or sensing is a thought or sense, and we become conscious of this thought or sensing The Swami says that the more we go deep into our own beings, the more we find that there is *something* which is not the empirical *ego* or *me*, but that is a pure *ego*, which is *I*, and there is also a relation between the empirical ego and the pure *ego*,—between *Jivatman* and *Paramatman* And this pure *ego* or *I* is clothed with thoughts and thinking powers of the mind, which becomes a thinker

We know that in the stream of consciousness, each unit of consciousness is within time and space, and is continually flowing with changes, but it should be remembered that each unit is specialized as our own personality Now, I feel a pain, and we know that pain is not merely a sensation which is floating in the mental space, but is our pain and not the pain of anyone else So, my feeling is my own feeling, and it is specialized in relation to me. Again, we cannot separate the sense of *I* from the sense of *me*, which is our personality Individuality forms the background of personality. Personality may change, but individuality does not change Personality may be manifold, but individuality is one The word 'individual' literally means 'that which is indivisible' or 'that which cannot be divided' We may have double, triple, or quadruple personality, but we cannot divide our pure self, which is the *Atman* Again, the word 'personality' is derived from Latin *persona*, which means 'mask' Our body and sense powers, with a language, with nationality, and with all the relation, in connection with the home life and parents and so on, all these make up our personality But our individuality is more lasting Personality may differ, may change and incarnate, but individuality remains the same Individuality

is the greater self or cosmic ego. Personality is a compound one, while our individuality is the simplest thing in the universe. So, when we understand the difference between personality and individuality, we know the difference between unreality and reality,—the changeable and the unchangeable, and then we realize the true nature of the infinite Being.

Then the Swami deals with the subject 'States of Existence' in the seventh chapter. The Swami says that individuality is the absolute Reality, whereas personality is the apparent reality. Individuality is said to be an *existence* which does not change. "We may consider this existence as universal like the vast ocean. In this ocean of existence, the sun, the moon, the stars, and the planets are like many waves or bubbles, which are constantly rising and going down. And that will give us an idea of unity in variety of the phenomenal appearances." The existence is called *sat*, i.e., that which is. This *sat* never changes. It is the ocean of Reality, and this existence can never become non-existence. In Vedanta, we find the mention of different states of existence, waking, dream and dreamless sleep (*jagrat*, *svapna*, and *sushupti*), and above these states, there is a stateless state which is known as the transcendental fourth or *turiya*. Now, all these three states, waking, dream, and dreamless sleep, are recognized as the apparent realities, whereas the transcendental one is the permanent reality.

The eighth chapter deals with 'Our Relation to the Absolute'. This chapter is an informative and beautiful one. This chapter gives us a comprehensive idea of the individual self and the universal Self, and their relation between them, and teaches that the individual self is a part and parcel of the Absolute, nay, it is non-different from the absolute Self. But before we understand what the Absolute is, we must pass through different stages of evolution in our ethical and spiritual progress. First of all, the Swami says, we shall start from the gross physical body and its reaction to the universe. Then gradually from the surface we shall go inward towards the centre. We will have to proceed in the spiritual path step by step. \* \* The conception of the personal God is the first step. Then after that we rise still higher and get into another state, which is deeper and grander than the con-

ception of an extra cosmic personal God \* \* That is called the qualified non-dualistic conception of God, and at last we will get the non-dualistic conception of God, which knows no duality or multiplicity, but is absorbed into the ocean of oneness and whole

Then the Swami explained religion, space, time, and cause, and compared the whole universe with a gigantic magnet, the neutral point of which knows neither positive pole, nor negative pole This neutral point is the absolute Brahman which is neither one, nor many It is an universal and uncontradicted unique *experience* which is above subject, object, and relation, as well as any process or method The Swami says that every individual soul will reach the Absolute sooner or later, and no one will be lost And there is no longer any going beyond the Absolute, or coming back from the Absolute by one who has realized it

## CHAPTER XXI

### *LIFE BEYOND DEATH*

'Unlike many of the books on spiritualism, the present work has a special feature and beauty of its own. Its pages do not narrate the chief legends and tales of the departed spirits and the wandering ghosts and also of the supernatural beings of the unknown etherial sphere, as one in most cases finds in such books that claim to unveil the mystery of the world beyond the grave, but the treatment of the chapters of this book is purely a scientific and rational one, and it has taken a new and novel departure from the prevailing methods and systems of the presentation of this subject.

Swami Abhedananda delivered from time to time a number of lectures on spiritualism in response to the invitations from many institutions like the Free Religious Association of America, the Psychical Research Society of America, the American Institute of Science, etc. The Swami was once the President of the Psychical Research Society of America. He was also well-acquainted with the leading scientists, spiritualists, medium and spirit-communications, during the long stay in America. He had many personal experiences about the departed spirits, seances, spirit-communications and other subjects of spiritualism, but believed that most of the spirits are earth-bound, as they are not free from desires and passions. Regarding the mediums, he has said that in most cases, the mediums are deprived of their mental and physical powers. Regarding the seances, the Swami is of the opinion that though the departed spirits communicate with the seance-holders and with the near and dear ones of them, and furnish informations of their earthly and etherial worlds, yet, in most cases, it has been found that all the informations and talks, received from them, are not genuine or correct. So the Swami says that everything of the spirits should be examined with logical and scientific mind.

Regarding this present work, it can be said that it is absolutely free from prejudices and blindly biased views. It is

a critical study of science and practice of spiritualism with impartial or dispassionate views. It has shown wisely and ably the merits and the demerits and also the bright and dark sides of the fact and science of spiritualism. At the same time the learned Swami has clearly solved all the controversial points and problems of the theory of birth and rebirth of the souls, existence and pre-existence of the souls, and immortality and eternality of the souls. In short, all the knotty problems of spiritualism or spiritism have been clearly explained and solved by this philosopher-saint in the chapters of the book with remarkable characteristics of his own.

It can be said that Swami Abhedananda has neither blindly upheld, nor has totally denied or rejected the facts of the aspects of spiritualism. As for example, the Swami has said:

Although many of the professional mediums have been pitifully exposed as frauds, still there are genuine mediums and authentic manifestations which cannot be explained by telepathy or any other theory than that of the communications of the discarnate spirits. In many cases, the audiences are deceived by the earth-bound spirits. The manifestations on the material plane, such as the table turning, the rapping knocks of the spirits, are ordinarily understood by spiritualism, but all such phenomena belong to the lower class of spiritualism or spiritism, as it is called by many. Spiritism can only satisfy our curiosity and does not explain any of our vital questions. But true spiritualism should be distinguished from that phase which is called spiritism. Higher spiritualism, therefore, is the name for that which starting from the belief in a life after death, reveals the nature of the soul and its relation to God.

Swami Abhedananda has further said: "Within the last fifty years modern spiritualism has given wonderful demonstrations regarding the existence of the disembodied spirits who continue to live even after the dissolution of their gross material forms. It has brought comfort and consolations to the hearts of many people, who were suffering from the evil effects of scepticism and unbelief, concerning the future life, caused by their dry theories of the atheistic, agnostic, and materialistic thinkers of the last century." But it is true, the Swami says, that though the disembodied spirits satisfy some of the curiosities of the questioning people, yet they cannot do any real good or

cannot help in any way in the path of spiritual progress. As for example, the Swami says "The genuine phenomena of spiritism may do some good in the way of satisfying the curiosity of certain people or of bringing the assurance that there is a life after death. They may foretell some petty trivial events in connection with our business or daily life, but cannot bring to us the highest wisdom and happiness which come to the soul through Divine communion. These spirits are not the angels, as the spiritualism may encourage the hope of meeting the departed spirits of our friends and relatives, and may bring consolation in the mind of those that doubt their existence, but it cannot give us the realization of the absolute Truth, or the attainment of Godconsciousness"

Swami Abhedananda, being a true philosopher and a man of realization, has surveyed everything of spiritualism or spiritism from the viewpoint of logic, reasoning, and science. He says that death is inevitable for all the living beings, who are involved in the cycle of birth and death, until they realize their immortal soul or *Atman*. Spiritualism is only an open passage for receiving informations about the existence and pre-existence of the soul and also about their eternality and immortality, but it cannot assure anyone to confer upon him the blessings of knowledge of the absolute Brahman.

The Swami says that when a man passes from this material plane, he lives in the mental plane, and does everything through his mind with the impressions (*samskaras*) of the works he performed in the material plane and also with the countless impressions that are hoarded in the subconscious lair of the mind. The departed soul as if sleeps there in the spirit or mind world, and, regarding this sleep after death, Swami Abhedananda says "The sleep after death is like the sleep before the birth. Then they (departed souls) have a second sleep before they come to this plane (material plane) they go into the sleep, and gravitate towards proper environment. If I have a strong desire to be the best artist, and if I do not succeed or pass away before I fulfil my desire, that desire will remain in me even in that soul-slumber. It will sprout again". Now, from this it is evident that the departed souls are gravitated again and again in this world of desires and fulfillments, because their souls exist and take births until

and unless they reach the absolute Truth by cutting asunder the knots of desires and passions. The law of *karma* is predominant in the lives of all living creatures. They do works in this world of duties and reap their results. Swami Abhedananda says "So this law of cause and sequence which is called the law of *karma*, does not wait for widows tears, or orphans cries. What we have sown, we must reap either on this plane, or in some other realm. So after death we may enjoy the pleasures of our thoughts and deeds in the heavenly regions"

From the law of *karma* it is proved that our soul is immortal and will not be extinguished after death. But it should be remembered, the Swami says, that the life after death as well as the life in the material world, are liable to change and also to the law of cause and sequence. So we shall have to transcend the realm of cause and effect, which is dominated by time and space, the ingredients of nescience or *maya*. And this transcendence is positive only by the realization of our true existence which is the immortal *Atman*.

There are sixteen chapters and five appendices in the book. If we briefly survey the different chapters, we find that the chapter one dealt with is modern science and the higher spiritualism'. In this chapter, the Swami has said that during the last sixty years, spiritualism made a considerable progress, convincing many scientific minds who were earnestly seeking for the truth of man's survival after death. The experimental spiritualism began in America in 1870. For the scientific study of the phenomena of spiritualism, the Psychical Research Society was established in London in 1886, and many savants like Dr Myers, Frank Podmore, Mr Home, Sir William Crookes, Sir Oliver Lodge, Prof William James, Alfred Russell Wallace, Dr Hedgeson, and others were interested in the research work of the science of spirit. Camille Flammarion, W T Stead, Prof Hyslop were also interested in the subject of spiritualism. Swami Abhedananda says that the higher spiritualism is at the root of all great religions of the world, and so the followers of different religions and also different great thinkers devoted their times for discovering some truths in the science and practice of spiritualism.

The chapter II deals with the problem of the existence

of the soul after the dissolution of the material body. In this chapter, Swami Abhedananda states that from ancient times, there existed some belief that the psyche or soul is non-different from the material body, and so after the dissolution of the body, the soul also dies. This faith mainly prevailed among the Charvakas, who were the disciples of Vîṇaspati and were out and out materialistic in thinking and doing. Besides them there were dormant questions about the soul among ordinary men, who were generally guided by blind faith. But Swami Abhedananda says that the disbelief in the existence of the soul after death prevails among the modern physiologists, the anatomists, the pathologists and a host of other materialistic and agnostic thinkers. They believe that the combinations of matter produces thought, intelligence, consciousness, mind and soul.

They teach that thought or intelligence or consciousness is nothing but a function of the brain. \* \* The brain brings into existence the material of consciousness of which our minds consist. \* \* As the materials of food, after falling into the stomach, change and assume new qualities, so the impressions of the brain are metamorphosed into idea, thought, emotion, will, impressions of the face, speech, disposition, etc. through the nerves. Thus thought or soul is the secretion of the brain, and when the brain is gone, the soul cannot exist. The Swami has quoted some lines in support of their materialistic theory from the writing of Buchner, Luys, Percival Lowell, Herbert Spencer, Prof. Clifford, Romanes, and others. The writings of these materialistic thinkers are similar to those of the Charvakas of India. But Vedānta does not admit this theory of the materialists. Swami Abhedananda says that according to Vedānta "knowledge of matter is nothing but the knowledge of that change of mind, of which we are conscious. \* \* Even our knowledge that the soul, or the mind, is a function of the brain, presupposes the existence of another mind or knower." This another mind or knower is the self or the soul, which is different from the mind and the body. Dr. Schiller, Immanuel Kant, Fichte, Schelling, and others also subscribe the similar view, though David Hume, like the Vijnanavadin Yogachara Buddhists, do not admit it, because according to Hume and the Yogachara Buddhists, the soul is a bundle of sensations or ideas, and so the soul is no other than



the loose and flying ideas

Swami Abhedananda has efficiently dealt with the problem of the existence of the soul after death. He says that most ancient writers of the vedic ages believed in the spirits or the *Pitris* or the departed fathers. The Egyptians, the Mesopotemians, the Chaldeans and other ancient nations of the world also believed in the double or soul, devoid of the material form. The Hindus believed that after death, the departed souls live in the mental world with the sleeping impressions (*samskaras*) of desires (*vasanas*) which existed and were not mitigated during life-time. The souls are subject to the cycle of birth and rebirth, until they go beyond ignorance (*ajnana*) and realize their immortal nature. The Hindus, says the Swami, do not mean destruction or annihilation by death. They mean by it a change of body, or the form. The *Bhagavad Gita* says that the soul, or the *Atman*, is deathless and birthless, it is eternal by its nature. So it is a proved fact that the soul exists after death, and its true nature is the *Atman*, or the Brahman, which is the background of the changing world-appearance.

The chapter III deals with the scientific view of death. In this chapter, Swami Abhedananda says that the mystery of death is not to be solved by mere mythology or mythological beliefs of the ancient people which have been handed down to us through generations, but to be solved by scientific enquiry and investigation. The duty of science is to disclose truths which are genuine and real, and so those who wish to unveil the mystery of the unknown spirit-world, should study the details of spiritualism with a scientific mind. Swami Abhedananda says "Scientific researches toward tracing the causes of death have brought out many truths and many laws which are unknown to the writers of the Genesis and other scriptures of different nations." But it is a fact that the orthodox science, or the materialistic science, is quite unfit to discover the real truth that is behind spiritualism or spiritism. But it requires an open mind, backed by reason and scientific enquiry into the truth. The Swami has given some instances of the embalming process of the dead bodies of the old Babylonians and Egyptians, and has said that the very process or method proves the existence of the soul beyond the grave. They believed in a

'double' and that means they maintained the belief of pre-existence of the soul. The Indians believe in the indestructibility of the life-force, and that life-force or *prana* is not the product of chemical actions of any material thing. It is all-intelligent and all-conscious, and is the *Atman*, which transcends the cycle of birth and rebirth.

Now, in support of the existence of the soul as the life-force or life-principle, Swami Abhedananda has forwarded an argument which is beautiful and very rational. He says: "Thus we see that there are two principal factors in the body: the one is the mind and the other is the vibration of the *prana*, or the vibratory state of the cells and the tissues which are governed by the mind." In fact, the mind is the director of all the organic functions of the body. But there is another principle which directs also the mind, and that director is the life-force, or the *prana*, or the soul. The Swami says: "It is the individual self-conscious life force which is called \* \* the living soul. The living soul means the self-conscious individualized life-force with the sense of 'I', and the sense of 'I' holds them together. This sense of 'I' holds all together, unifies them, and makes the separate parts vibrate and produce a perfect harmony. That harmony is life \* \*. But advanced science tells us that there is a director and this director has the absolute control over the whole organism. He is the living soul. At the time of death, he disconnects himself from the organs and leaves the body".

The Swami has given in this chapter some interesting information of spiritualism. He says that a fine substance emanates from the body at the time of death. It is luminous, and is called the *ectoplasm*. The French Ambassador, Camille Flammarion has reported about this *ectoplasm* in his famous book, *The Unknown*, and he said that "this ectoplasm is a substance, which contains finer matter in vibration, and this finer matter forms the under-garment of the soul, and the gross physical body is the outer garment. So we have two bodies: the gross physical body and the finer or etherial body which exists in each one of us". The *ectoplasm* is a vapour-like substance and has no particular form. It is like a cloud and can take a shape or a form and can be photographed. The disembodied souls or departed spirits who desire to be materialized and to communicate with the near

and dear ones in the phenomenal world, generally take the help of this *ectoplasm* which remains in the body of everyone. The Swami says "Our human bodies are emanating that substance all the time. It can be seen especially at the time when there is a medium in a trance-like condition. The materializing medium emanate that very strongly." In fact, the *ectoplasm* is the under-garment of the soul, and the gross physical body is the outer garment. The Hindu scriptures say that there is also a causal body (*karana-sharira*), which forms the background of the finer or etherial (subtle or *sukshma sharira*, but the real soul or *Atman* is above all these bodies, gross, subtle and causal. The scientific study of spiritualism will disclose this truth.

The chapter IV deals with the soul after death. The Swami has given here many references from the *Upanishads*, *Gita* and other Hindu scriptures. He has said that the Hindus believe that the righteous and good souls pass through the *devayana* or, path of the *devas*, whereas the ordinary souls pass through the *pitriyana* or path of the departed fathers. The *Upanishad* has described that the departed spirits pass through the principal stages like smoke, night, dark, fifteen days, and each of the departed souls has a spirit as its ruler. Each of these spirits introduces them to the other spirits and thus they go very quickly to their proper destinations. Now, from these references-cum-evidences we come to know that the souls of the living beings, exist after death and come under the sway of the cycle of birth and rebirth until they reach their final shape, the immortal self. Swami Abhedananda says that death means the change of forms. "Death of one form reproduces or gives birth to another form, as death of the seed form produces the tree-form and so forth. Again that which is reproduced, will die and then reproduce another and so on."

The chapter V deals with rebirth of the soul. The Swami says 'Rebirth of the soul presupposes its existence as an intelligent entity and it is separable and independent of the gross physical body. By birth, we mean that the centre of the self-conscious activity which thinks, reacts on the personal or external phenomena, and consciously performs the functions of life. Regarding rebirth of the soul Swami Abhedananda says that reappearance of the germs of life in

gross physical forms, whether animal or human, is called 'manifestation', which is known and understood by the theory of rebirth of the soul, or the doctrine of reincarnation, as it is called in the Vedanta philosophy (Cf the Swami's book, *Reincarnation*) By rebirth of the soul, Vedanta does not mean the theory of transmigration or metempsychosis which is quite different from the theory of reincarnation. The theory of reincarnation can nicely be explained by the theory of evolution (*abhyavaktivada* or *srishtivada*), as advanced by the Sankhya philosophy or Kapila. The Sankhya says that evolution means the projection of something which exist in a seed form. Something cannot come out of nothing. The entire universe comes out from the *Prakriti*, which is the sum total of all the individual soul and all the matter. When the unmanifested form comes out as the manifested form, then we call evolution, or projection, or creation. Vedanta also admits this theory. The soul or the life-force of all the sentient and insentient objects are uncreated and immortal, and it appears with a manifested body from its unmanifested causal form. So rebirth of the soul presupposes the idea of immortality of the soul. Swami Abhedananda has therefore refuted the one-birth theory and the theory of heredity. He says that "the whole human nature must have existed in that germ of life in some form or other".

The chapter VI deals with the soul and its density. Swami Abhedananda says "The souls, which have desires for earthly things, will have to come down to the earth. Some souls will remain earthly bound for a certain length of time, say one hundred or a thousand years \* \* They will be born again. So the destiny of the human soul is determined by thoughts and desires and tendencies. We create our own destiny by our thoughts and desires and deeds \* \* God is not responsible for our conditions. We ourselves are responsible \* \*"

The chapter VII deals with the problems of pre-existence and immortality. In this chapter, Swami Abhedananda has forwarded a very strong and unrefutable argument in support of pre existence, reincarnation, and immortality of the soul. The Swami has refuted the theories of heredity and one birth theory, as believed by the old Christian theologians, and says that both the theory of heredity and that of one-birth cannot

explain or solve the problems of life and death. He says that according to Vedanta, immortality means the continued existence in the eternal future, whereas pre-existence means the continued existence in the eternal past. "The one cannot exist without the other. Each of these only expresses the one-half of our life which is eternal, and both of these together make a complete whole and that is the soul-life. The soul-life is the uncreated and unborn life-principle that connects the threads of past, present and future, and also connects the life and death. In fact, rebirth and reincarnation of the individual soul are based upon the truth of the eternality of the soul-life which is expressed by pre-existence and immortality. According to Vedanta, says the Swami, immortality includes the meaning of progress i.e. progress of growth and evolution of the soul from the lower to the higher stages of development. "It also includes the ideas that each individual soul will manifest the powers which are already latent in the soul by going through different stages of growth and development until perfection and omniscience and omnipresence are acquired." \* \* This idea leads to the theories of rebirth and reincarnation of the individual soul which is expressed by pre-existence and immortality."

The chapter VIII, deals with pre-existence and immortality and though these theories or problems have been discussed elaborately in the chapter VII, yet the Swami discusses them in a separate chapter by giving more facts and arguments, which are also supported by science. The Swami says in course of his argument "Pre-existence and immortality are so closely related to each other that if we deny one, we cannot accept another." Vedanta says that each individual soul existed before the birth of the body, and so if we believe that we shall continue to exist after death, we shall have to admit that we existed in the past, otherwise we cannot have immortal life in future."

The chapter IX deals with the subject-matter of science and immortality. In the beginning of this chapter, Swami Abhedananda has refuted the belief of the orthodox Christians that Jesus the Christ for the first time brought the eternal life and immortality to light. The Swami says that the idea of immortality or the immortal life existed in India some thousands of years before Christ, and the sacred scriptures of the Hindus, including the Vedas, have proved to the world the truth that

the *Atman* or the real life-principle of the soul is eternal and immortal. The students of comparative religion as well as those of history know well that Egypt, Greece, Chaldea, Mesopotamia and other ancient and most civilized countries preached the theory or idea of resurrection of the body and also of the belief in a 'double' or soul from the times between 12,000 and 8,000 B.C. The Greeks believed that the righteous one who went to the Elysium Fields, would continue to enjoy the celestial pleasures throughout eternity. The Hindus also believe in the heavens (*svargalokas*) where the religious pious and righteous ones go and enjoy celestial pleasures, but they hold that the heavenly pleasures are not permanent and eternal and so after enjoying fruits of pleasures of the heavens for a definite period, the souls come back again to this material universe, and this is the difference between the Greeks and the Hindus regarding their heavens and celestial pleasures. However, the idea of heaven, life after death and immortality also prevail among the Jews, Parsees, Zoroastrians, Chinese, Scandinavians and others.

Regarding science and immortality, Swami Abhedananda says that it is a common belief that science has nothing to do with the problems of life after death and immortality, as it is absolutely concerned with the repeated observations and investigations upon the raw materials of the changing phenomena of the universe. But that is not the fact. Modern science "has resolved the whole phenomenal world into three states, and has explained that they are matter, energy, and consciousness. These three things are the fundamental principles of the universe. If you study science or any of the philosophies of the world, you will find these three things, matter, energy, and consciousness. But, in truth, matter, force or energy are inseparable, and they are different states of the same substance. Then there comes the third thing, consciousness." Consciousness is indestructible and eternal. So science which resolves the three main principles of matter, energy, and consciousness as 'the fundamental principles of the universe, is quite eligible for discussing about the doctrine of immortality, and the mystery of life beyond death held much science to the unifying truth of the universe.

The chapter X deals with spiritualism. Swami Abhedananda

explains in this chapter the main principles and methods of spiritualism, with a scientific outlook. He has refuted the popular belief and theories of production, combination and transmission. The upholders of the production theory are the atheists, agnostics, materialists, and evolutionists. They believe that the material body produces the soul, which is really absurd. The upholders of the combination theory "explain that the neutral current is a stream which produces a stream of feelings. The feelings are different units of feeling, which are loose and disconnected, and there is no intelligent something which can connect those units of feelings. This theory echoes the theory of the *vinanavadin* Buddhists, who maintain that in a stream of consciousness (*vinana*), the units of consciousness are separate from one another, and are momentary. This theory is untenable, as it admits no intelligent something which can bind or unite together the momentary units of consciousness.

Next we find that the transmission theory proves that the soul, or the mind, or the consciousness, is outside of the brain. It is not the result or product of the brain, "but is something like a self-conscious entity, which is using the brain, just as a musician uses the piano and plays on the keys." Now the transmission theory 'tells us that the 'double' or soul is the astral self of the individual, and this astral self is something which can live independent of the gross material body. This astral self can pass out and can appear in etherial form and perform many acts, which our ordinary self cannot do. The astral doubles are sometimes perceived by the relatives and the friends of the dying persons." Somehow or other, Vedanta accepts the transmission theory to prove that the matter is not perceived as an object, and is, therefore, meaningless, until there remains the mind as the subject. From this it is proved that matter is different from the mind, as the mind forms the ground as well as the cause of the matter.

Swami Abhbedananda has also discussed in this chapter the problems of personality and individuality. The personality is that particular consciousness which is related to the physical body. But individuality is something which is beyond the material body and is indivisible. Personality is changing and might be held in an earth-bound condition, but individuality is constant, unchanging and infinite. Personality is a kind of

mask and it is the garment of the mind. Personality may be double, triple, and quadruple. But it is not a certain state of consciousness, and is like an assumed character. In other words, it can be said that different ideas and different tendencies and desires create different personalities which are supported by unchanging and eternal individuality. The Swami has elaborately discussed about individuality and personality in his book, *True Psychology*.

The chapter XI deals with spiritualism and Vedanta. In this chapter Swami Abhedananda has discussed about the ancestor-worship which is prevalent among the civilized nations like the ancient Indians, Egyptians, Babylonians, Chaldeans, Assyrians, Chinese, Parsees and other nations. The belief in the 'double' has been mentioned before and this 'double' is like the *sukshma-sharira* of the departed soul. The ancient Parsees used to call the departed souls of the ancestors, the *fravashis* and the Hebrews called them *elohim*. The Hindus perform the *shraddha* ceremony for the satisfaction of the departed soul, and they believe that anything offered with devotion and regard to the departed souls, brings contentment and peace among the disembodied spirits. The realm of the fathers or ancestors is called the *pitrloka*, where departed fathers enjoy heavenly life and celestial pleasures. The *Katha Upanishad* has related the story of Nachiketa and Yama, the Ruler of Death, and the story proves the existence of the soul after death. The Hindu scriptures say that the souls in this phenomenal plane and the souls in the astral plane are directed by the law of *karma*, or the law of action and reaction. The Buddhists also admit the theory. And this law of *karma* proves the existence of the soul after death.

Swami Abhedananda has also described about the mediums through whom the spirits can communicate with their friends and relatives in this phenomenal world with their astral bodies and Swami Abhedananda personally witnessed those materialized spirit-bodies when he attended some of the interesting seances in America. The Swami says that the earth-bound souls may take the form of previous material bodies for his intense will, but they cannot hold those astral or subtle bodies for a long time, because they are not really conscious of their material bodies, so those bodies are melted away after a short time.



The chapter XII deals with the problems of spiritualism and ancestor-worship. This chapter can be said to be the supplementary one of chapter XI. It is interesting to mention that Swami Abhedananda has explained in this chapter many things about spiritualism including the miserable state of the disembodied spirits and of the mediums, together with the ancestorship in different scriptures of different nations of the world. He has also related some of his personal experiences he gathered in the seances with the spirit-communication. He says 'Having spent sometime with the mediums of all kinds that exist in America, I wish to say a few words regarding my experiences. I have been invited by the spiritualists to speak for them and to attend their seances. I had accepted their invitations with great pleasure in order to make some investigations for my own satisfaction. I have seen many materialized spirits and have spoken with them. I have had long conversations with the spirits who spoke through the tin trumpets, and have asked them many questions, but I have not found a single spirit in any seance and not a single medium who could answer my questions satisfactorily. I have asked them about the life after death, \* \* on many occasions they have confessed their ignorance and have said 'We do not know, you know better that we can tell you. Some spirits have often referred to me for my approval of their answers to the questions which they were asked by other sitters. A few years ago, I was amused to hear from a materializing spirit in a public seance 'Oh, here is a thinking-box, what can we say before him?' This exclamation came from an American Indian spirit. I was sitting next to the husband of the medium and, as he was a friend of mine, I asked him the meaning of such a remark. He said 'She refer to you, I inquired 'Why?' He replied 'She thinks you are very wise, and she cannot show her power. I am sorry to say that the seance was not successful that evening. On another occasion, I had a long talk with a spirit, and asked her many questions regarding the mode of living in the spirit world, and her answers to my questions were perfectly idiotic \* \* Sometimes, however, I noticed that telepathically my own thoughts and my own ideas and every expression was reproduced as perfectly as if I was answering my own question \* \* Some of them congratulated me and said 'My spirit-guides have taught me

exactly what you have explained'

The chapter XIII deals with the spiritualistic mediumship. The Swami says 'We are all familiar with the process of developing mediumship \* \* Those who wish to become the mediums, seek the company of other friends who have the same desire. They form themselves into a circle which is known as the *developing circle*. They are told by other mediums, or by their spirit-guides, to select a definite room, where they should sit as often as possible, at least once a week, but the sittings must be at the same hour and in the same evening of the week \* \*' The sitters sit in the developing circle with their negative mind, and must not ask any question, but surrender themselves to the will of their invisible control, and calmly wait for the wonderful results of the developing process.

Regarding the mediums, the Swami says that "a medium, who appears to be inspired in a semi-trance or full trance condition, does not show any power of his or her, which may be called a gift or inspiration \* \* A medium, who becomes absolutely negative or passive in mind and body, becomes subject to all the surrounding influences of the earth-bound spirits who are constantly seeking opportunity to control, and make some victims, and thus through ignorance a medium opens a psychic field which is dominated by the will of these earth-bound spirit". And for this reason, Swami Abhedananda has not encouraged them who wish to be the mediums, because the mediums in many cases lose their physical and mental powers, and sometimes become invalid.

The chapter XIV deals with the automatic slate-writing. In this chapter, the Swami has related the story of his departed *gurubhai* Jogen (Swami Jogananda), who appeared before the seances, and wrote with a blue pencil his name in four classical languages, Sanskrit, English, Bengali and Greek. Mr. Keeler was the medium, and it happened on August 5th at 10 o'clock in America. The photograph of this slate-writing with the spirit-hand has been included in this book, *Life Beyond Death*. The Swami says "In another seance when I wanted to see Jogen materialized, he replied that he did not like it, I was surprised to the spirit of Babu Balaram Basu of 57, Ramakanta Bose Street, Calcutta \* \* After blessing me, the whole materialized figure of Balaram Babu melted away in a mist like

white substance (*ectoplasm*) and disappeared”

The chapter XV or the last chapter deals with ‘what is there beyond the grave’. In this chapter, Swami Abhedananda has elaborately and scientifically dealt with many important problems of spiritualism. He says that Jesus the Christ brought eternal life into light, and the Christians believe in the resurrection of the spiritual body, which continue to live after the gross physical body is destroyed, and this belief proves the immortality of the soul among the Christian nations of the world. The similar belief is seen also among the Zoroastrians, Egyptians, Chaldeans, Babylonians, Chinese, Hindus and all other ancient nations like the Romans, the Greeks, and the Scandinavians. They all had a belief in an eternal life.

The Swami says that when a soul goes out of the material body after death, it sleeps without consciousness or knowledge of his passing away, and he awakes after a long time. When he awakes, he finds himself in an unknown world in an unfavourable circumstance with which he is not familiar. Then his sleeping and unfulfilled desires become very acute. He tries to mitigate his desires, but fails, and so he suffers much, and this suffering of the departed soul has been described as the suffering of hell (*naraka-yantranā*). But the good souls enjoy peace and happiness in the after-world. An earth-bound spirit further suffers for his failure in communicating with the near and dear ones. It has been recorded that many disembodied souls try to rush in the open passage of the mediumistic current, but many of them cannot materialize themselves for their lack of will-power, and so they suffer. But the spirits can materialize themselves either with the help of the mediums, or without the help of any medium. B. V. Schrenck Notzing, Sir Oliver Lodge, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and others have given vivid descriptions of the process of materialization of the disembodied spirits. Swami Abhedananda says that a very few people understand or believe in the process of spirit-materialization. “I have seen with my own eyes and carefully examined in every possible way which I use under those circumstances. I have been called to come inside the cabinet of a seance where I felt at least twenty hands on my back, some pulling my collar, sash, and some putting hands on my back all at the same time. \* \* I have held the materialized

hand of an American-Indian spirit which melted away in my hand' The Swami says 'Some of the dying persons develop the clairvoyance and the clairaudience. They can appear just at the distant friends in the form of the apparition and they can give their messages. Further he has said ' "If it (the departed soul) has strong attachments to the relatives or the friends and if it cannot get over those attachments, it hovers around them, remains close to them, tries to help them to be loved by them, and there it is conscious of its personality \* \* I would be wondering while my relatives and friends and all the dearest ones do not recognise me, and there I have to suffer. Now that is what happens with certain people who do not know that they are dead \* \* It is just like a state of hell' "But many of the departed spirits remain in that state of delusion for a long time. Our time does not affect the spirits. Ours a thousand years may be five days to them, because ours is according to our standard and their according to their standard. So no one can say how long a soul will remain in any particular condition in the afterworld is important that we should remember this law that we create our future, we create our destiny, and we build our character by our thoughts and deeds." However the Swami has warned and instructed them who are eager to be the mediums and also wish to sit in the seance to communicate with the disembodied spirits that the aim and object of human life are to attain the self-realization, and not to satisfy the cheap curiosity of communicating with the departed spirits. Because by communicating with the spirits, good or bad, a man cannot make himself free from the bondage of nescience or *maya*. The Swami says "Supposing all the phenomena of spiritism to be true and genuine, but what have the spiritualists gained by these communications outside of the satisfaction of their idle curiosity? Have they learned any of the higher truths? \* \* Vain is the hope of those spiritualists who expect to know the absolute Truth through communications from the earth-bound spirits." The Swami further says that death teaches a great lesson to all the mortal beings, and teaches that the material body as well as the material world along with its pleasures and pains, are not permanent. The permanent thing in this world is the *Atman*, which is the background or support of the body and

the world. So we should go beyond the attachment of the worldly pleasures, and should attain to the highest spiritual realization of the *Atman*. The Swami afterwards concludes

We are just playing on the surface, but the time is bound to come for each individual soul when there will be an awakening of a desire to know the real truth'

## CHAPTER XXII

### SCIENCE OF PSYCHIC PHENOMENA

Well has it been said by Swami Abhedananda, the direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna 'Those, who care for name, fame, and worldly prosperity may run after psychic powers and exercise them for their selfish motives, but the true seekers after spiritual perfection never crave for them, but shun them as obstacles and source of bondage and self-delusion' The mystic Sadhaka Ramaprasad also sang "Full many a gem (*mani*) is scattered in the courtyard of the Lord Chintamani', but the true lovers of God never hanker after them, but they strive only to see the Deity which is the main object of their unswerving love and devotion. The path to spiritual perfection is never smooth and easy-going, but from time to time there appear high hills of temptations as pseudo-gems of *siddhis*, or the psychic powers, which delude and mislead the individual souls. The real aspirants of divine knowledge are never deluded by them.

The subconscious plane is a vast field, says Swami Abhedananda, as it "possesses unlimited powers and possibilities" It is the hidden storehouse of energy and power, and all powers that are manifested on the physical, mental, and spiritual planes, are different phases of the same unmanifested energy, lying latent in the subconscious or the unconscious. It is the subliminal self that creates destiny and character of all the individual souls. It is the perennial sources that enables us to express thoughts and deeds in our daily run of life. It can be controlled and concentrated. It is completely mastered by the Yogis who practise for their eternal union with the infinite source of knowledge and bliss, nay, for the divine realization of the Absolute. By their ceaseless and sincere *sadhana* or spiritual practices they can draw out all the powers lying latent below the threshold of the subconscious plane of the mind. But these powers are scattered gems and pearls in the courtyard of the Divine Lord, as has been said before, and so they never help us to enter into the inner sanctuary of

Chintamani, the Lord of the universe 'It is for this reason', says the Swami, "Jesus the Christ, Buddha, Ramakrishna, and other spiritual leaders of mankind forbade their disciples to make any demonstration of psychic power or psychic phenomena, but taught them to obey the true spiritual laws by rising above the psychic nature'

Swami Abhedananda warns us always not to give any response to the alluring call of our selfish motives and petty desires and also not to run after the will-o-the-wisp of the psychic phenomena, but instructs and inspires us to overcome and transcend them with our triumphant march towards the realization of the absolute consciousness. He says that it is our goal of life to immortalize ourselves with the radiance of Eternity', and not to make ourselves the 'men of the cave' which is no other than the den of delusion. It is the Blessedness alone that can remove the cares and anxieties of the deceitful world and that can console us with the blessings of the tranquil peace and the everlasting happiness.

We should remember the words of the Swami "The secret chamber of the soul of an ordinary man or woman is packed up from the ceiling to the floor with thoughts and ideas that are worldly, and also with desires and happiness of the flesh, and still we wonder why God does not come to us, why we have not attained the Godconsciousness" (*Path of Realization*). So, "there must be", as Eckhart says, "perfect stillness in the soul before God can whisper His word into it \* \* When all passions are stilled and all worldly desires are silenced, the word of God can be heard in the soul"

The spiritual perfection is the be-all and end all of the human life. The charms of the psychic phenomena are frail and fleeting to those who sincerely aspire to drink deep the nectar of Heaven and Immortality. So we should not be mad to run after them, but should raise ourselves to the limitless height of perfect wisdom and eternal freedom.

This volume contains five illuminating lectures on the *Science of Psychic Phenomena*, delivered in America, and they march with an array of historical and experimental facts, skilfully treated with the philosophical and scientific thoughts. The Swami thus deals with his subject in the chapter I, showing that the psychic forces are submerged under the threshold of

the subconscious mind. They are like the waves of different sizes that rise from the bottom to the conscious plane, and play the miracles of the wonderful powers. These powers originally exist in the universe, and pervade the whole field of it. And they are not extra ordinary ones, but appear as such, because we do not know their real nature and source. Naturally they remain with us as obscure and unknown, and so we take them as wonders. The Swami has wisely explained all the phases of those powers, such as, hypnotism, telepathy or thought-transference, mind-reading, clairvoyance, clairaudience, and other marvellous psychic phenomena with the spirit of a true scientist. He says that these powers can be achieved and be mastered by the systematic yogic practices. The *Patanjala* and other systems of Yoga of India deal with them and say that they are the inherent powers of the mind. They bring only material prosperity and success, but fail to bring unto us the deliverance and the heavenly peace.

In the chapter II, Swami Abhedananda deals skilfully with the *Prana and the Healing Power*. He says that the human mind is nothing but "a continued adaptation to environments." \* \* The more perfect the adaptations, the more perfect is the manifestation of life. The law of adaptation is not mechanical or chemical, but it is what we call the manifestation of the life-force, or the vital energy. Everything in this universe is governed by this inevitable or inscrutable law, and the violation of this law brings disorder in the physique (body) and the psyche (mind). It also creates ill-health, diseases, and similar disturbances. The life-force or *Prana* is the prime mover of the mind. It is also the sustainer and preserver of the organism of the universe. So if any one can control this life-force which is known as the vital energy, he becomes the master of the body and the mind, nay, he becomes the master of the whole universe.

The chapter III deals with the *Magnetic Healing*. The magnetic healing is also the power of the *Prana*. In this lecture, Swami Abhedananda narrates two of the striking incidents of the magnetic healing power of his great Master, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, one is that of curing the headache of Swami Vivekananda, and the other is that of removing the appetite of some of the Master's disciples.



The chapter IV deals with three lectures (1) *Science of Mental Healing*, (2) *Spiritual Healing*, and (3) *Healing by Discarnate Spirit*. In the first lecture, the Swami shows the intimate relation between the body and the mind. In it, he refutes all the prevailing materialistic theories which view that life and mind 'are the results of material forces and chemical actions of matter'. 'Consciousness is the result of the activity of the brain cells'. The Swami says that 'every mental function produces the corresponding physical changes in the system'. The mental suggestion produces some wonderful effects upon the physical body. He gives two illustrations about it: one is of a girl who was cured by mere suggestion in her hypnotic sleep, and the other, of a man who fell a victim to death by the mental suggestion. The close study of the latent powers of the mind and its exercise can cure all diseases and ailments. The Swami also forwards here a statement of his personal experience about the curing of the mountain-sickness by the power of the mind. He shows that every organ of our organism has been created as the outcome of our desires. The mental healing is a natural power and not an extraordinary one.

In the second lecture Swami Abhedananda says that 'all the spiritual healing is produced by the individual self when he reaches the highest stage of spiritual progress. This science of spiritual healing covers various methods of the healing, such as, regulating the body and the mind, the physical movements, and the correct breathing. It contains the *negative* and the *affirmative* methods. There is another kind of healing which is known as the *metaphysical method*. He states how he cured the fractured fibula of his own right leg by mental suggestion, when he was in the Vedanta Ashrama at West Cornwall, Connecticut. He also says that before healing others, we shall acquire the power of self-healing first.

The third lecture of the Swami shows how the disembodied spirits possess the healing power. He says that the prayer is another method, by which healing can be done. He lays stress upon the right faith and discards the blind one. He concludes by saying: "Science of the spiritual healing thus explains the power of the spirit over the mind and the matter, and that each living soul, being the image or reflection of the divine spirit, is the true healer within us."

The chapter V gives a masterly exposition-cum-interpretation of the *Science of Perfect Health*. In it, Swami Abhedananda shows that "perfect health is the firm and sure root of success, prosperity, fulfilment of desires, and freedom of the soul". He says that the body is the temple of God, and the body is the instrument, by which men can love the spiritual achievement. He refutes all the materialistic arguments, regarding the soul and consciousness. He condemns the unjust and queer criticisms of the Christian missionaries and the so-called apostles of Western civilization who ridicule the custom and the sanitary laws of the Hindus of India. He says "They (Christian missionaries) condemned this custom and called the Hindus heathen idolators and worshippers of cows. With a loud noise they tried to civilize them, by converting them into their own faith. But now those heathen customs are adopted in civilized America."

Swami Abhedananda says "In India, religion was brought into every phase of life". The people of India eat religion, drink religion, sleep religion, talk religion, and dream religion. Religion is their laws of life, and they apply and use religion in all the spheres of their lives. Constant thought of the material objects drags the soul down on the plane of the gross matter, and the Swami calls this 'thought' as the 'attachment' or delusion that compels us 'to mistake the body for the soul and matter for spirit'. So he instructs all to strike off the fetters of the earthly attachments and to seek God, the unchangeable Reality amidst the continual changes of the world. He says that it is the body that suffers from cold or diseases, and not the soul. The soul is diseaseless and deathless. Still the body should not be overlooked and ignored, as it is the best means for achieving the highest goal of human life. The robust body, or the sound health, is necessary to enjoy the blessings of the peaceful life, and this "is to be found, when one does not think of the body, and when one does not feel its existence in particular". The treatment of such an abstruse subject has been made clear by Swami Abhedananda with a critical and keen sense of judgment in a clear and lucid style. The readers, familiar with the works of the Swami, will see in these pages the firm imprints of scholarship, intellectuality, and spiritual excellence, along with a comprehensive view of a

master mind His wonderful arguments and clear insight bear testimony to the fact that he himself knows how to unveil the mystery of the world as well as of the psychic phenomena So he has got every right to deal with this difficult subject and to show the path of emancipation to them, who are carried away by the flood-waves of charms of the psychic phenomena

The appendix, *Science of Mystery* discloses the fact that everything of the universe remained unmanifested in the beginningless past in the womb of the primordial energy or *Prakriti*, and when evolution is required, everything appears in material form, and again in involution, everything manifested goes back to the causal state Therefore, nothing is lost The world of change is impermanent, but amidst the changes, there is an unchanging substance which is known as the *Atman*, or the Brahman The *Atman* forms the ground as well as the cause of the universe, but from the non dualistic standpoints the *Atman* is not the ground and the cause of the world-appearance, but for the nescience or *maya*, evolution and involution (*srishti* and *pralaya*) happen The Swami instructs all to take shelter in the *Atman* which is immortal and self-shining for regaining the immortal nature of them

## CHAPTER XXIII

### THE MYSTERY OF DEATH

#### A STUDY IN PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION OF THE

#### *Katha Upanishad*

*The Mystery of Death* was delivered serially as class lectures before the American students and audiences from the 2nd January, 1906 to the 8th May, 1906. Nineteen lectures were delivered with the central thought and philosophy of the *Katha Upanishad*. Some erroneously take it as a book on the Science of Spiritualism, i.e., the science and whereabouts of the departed souls, and the details of the spirit-world (*paraloka* or *pretaloka*), but, in truth, it is a book on philosophy and religion of the *Katha Upanishad*, along with the sacred dialogue between Nachiketa, the seeker after the divine Truth, and Yama, the Ruler of Death. Swami Abhedananda has given in this book a systematic discussion on the religious and philosophical thoughts of ancient India.

It is interesting to mention in this connection that it seems that Swami Abhedananda has selected the title, *The Mystery of Death*, of the book, being inspired by the essay on the *Secret of Death* by Ralph Waldo Emerson and also by the essay or the book, entitled *The Secret of Death* by Sir Edwin Arnold. Emerson imbibed the sublime thoughts and ideas of the *Gita*, *Upanishad*, and Vedanta, and specially was inspired in the upanishadic thoughts by the philosopher, Schopenhauer. Emerson was also inspired by the philosophy of the *Bhagavad Gita* by Carlyle. However, let me quote some of the lines of the lecture *Ralph Waldo Emerson's Poem 'Brahm'*, delivered by Swami Abhedananda in New York on April 4, 1921, before the American audience, which will throw some light on the matter. The Swami says "In his essay on *Immortality*, Emerson quotes from one of these *Upanishads*, a portion of the

Veda, that is the earliest treatise on the Vedanta philosophy. He takes the translation of the *Katha Upanishad* into his essay and incorporates it. It is entitled, *The Secret of Death*. It was afterwards translated by Sir Edwin Arnold under the title, *The Secret of Death*. It begins with the story that a young man who was a seeker after truth was sent to the abode of death, and he asked questions about what happens after death, \* \* \* It seems that the Swami has slightly changed the title given by both Ralph Waldo Emerson and Sir Edwin Arnold, and has selected the title of his book on religion and philosophy of the *Katha Upanishad* as the *Mystery of Death*. The lecture on "Ralph Waldo Emerson's Poem *Brahm*" has been printed as an *Appendix I* to Swami Abhedananda's new book, *Thoughts on Sankhya, Buddhism and Vedanta*.

The *Katha Upanishad* belongs to the Krishna Yajurveda, i.e. it is the *Upanishad* or the rationalistic philosophy and religion of the Yajurveda. This *Upanishad* contains two main chapters, and in the first chapter there are three dialogues with seventy-two *slokas*, and three dialogues with forty-eight *slokas*. The *Upanishads* are known as the revelation of the eternal Truth which was revealed in the purified hearts of the vedic Rishis. The seers of ancient India practised the spiritual *sadhana* and saw in their ecstatic vision the eternal unchangeable Truth, and this Truth was preserved through ages. In ancient India, the vedic and the upanishadic texts (treatises) were orally transmitted from generation to generation. The sincere students used to take lessons of the upanishadic texts staying long at the preceptors' houses. Gradually the texts of the *Upanishads* were written on the leaves of trees, or on the dry barks of trees, and when paper was invented, they were put in paper.

The *Upanishad* teaches that truth which is one, is manifested in manifold ways. The self-revealed truth of the *Upanishad* says that ordinary men live in the den of delusion, and so they make themselves enchained in the attachment of the worldly things. They are rather the toys in the hand of nescience (*ajnana*), but when their minds are sufficiently purified by *vichara*, their plays of games in the world of contingencies and delusion are ended, and then realize the absolute Truth which eternally resides in their hearts. They then come to know that their desires and attachment to the

deceitful worldly things have created an eternal cycle of births and rebirths which entails a limitless chain of ascends and descends, and there is no escape for them, until and unless they cut asunder the chain of delusion or *maya* which has made them forget their innermost immortal essence. The sublime teachings of the *Upanishad* lead them to the path of escape from the den of delusion, and enlighten them to realize the changing nature of the worldly things as well as the unchanging nature of the absolute consciousness which is known in the *Upanishad* as the *Atman* or Brahman. This realization of the *Atman* or Brahman comes when men are awakened from the sleep of nescience (*ajnana*).

Now, what do we mean by the word '*Upanishad*'? Swami Abhedananda has thrown sufficient light upon the term, and says that "the *Upanishad* is that which destroys the ignorance and superstition of the individual soul", or "that which guides the individual soul towards the attainment of the highest wisdom and perfection", or "that which slackens the attachment to our material bodies and to earthly conditions and to the material world". Sankara and the commentators also interpreted the word *Upanishad* in these three main ways. They have said that the word *Upanishad* does not connote the idea of a particular book, or some definite books, but it connotes the idea of collection of wisdom and truth which are eternal, uncontradicted and permanent all the time. The *Upanishad* is a self-revealed truth which discloses the mystery of the absolute unchangeable Truth. Swami Abhedananda says that the *Upanishad* is the "collected wisdom which is eternal and uncreated by human agency". \* \* It emanates from God, it is God, it is the highest of our life."

Sankaracharya said that the *Upanishad* is the *moksha-shastra* or the *Brahmavidya*, because it reveals the immediate knowledge or awareness of the Brahman. Sankara said that those who are sincere seekers after the absolute Truth, and have purified their hearts not by the process of the suppression of manifold desires (i.e., mind), but by transforming the desires into pure consciousness (*shuddha-chaitanya*), undoubtedly go beyond all doubts, all bindings and also beyond the cycle of births and rebirths forever and ever, and realize the transcending Brahman. Sankara mentioned in one of the com-

mentaries

सदेर्धातोर्विशरणत्ववसादनार्थस्य उपनिषदस्य विषयप्रत्ययान्तस्य रुमिद 'उपनिषद्' इति । उपनिषत्कृत्वेन च व्याचिख्यासित-ग्रन्थ-प्रतिपाद्यवेद्य वस्तुविषया विद्योच्यते । केन पुनरर्थयोगेन उपनिषत्कृत्वेन विद्योच्यते इति ? उच्यते, ये समुद्रबो दृष्टनुश्चिक-विषयवितृष्ण सन्त उपनिषत्कृत्वाच्या वक्षमाणमक्षणा विद्यामुपसद्योपगम्य तन्निष्ठतया निश्चयेन शील्यन्ति, तेषामविद्यादे ससारबीजस्य विशरणद्विसनाद् विनाशात् इत्यनेनार्थयोगेन विद्योपनिषदिदुच्यते । \* \* इति ब्रह्मगमयितृत्वेन योगाद्ब्रह्मविद्या उपनिषद् ।

The subject-matter (*vishaya*) of the *Upanishad* is the Parabrahman, the highest unchangeable Truth. The utility or importance (*prayojana*) lies in the utter extinction of the fire of worldly desires and simultaneous attainment of the supramental knowledge. The connection (*samvandha*) between the seeker of the Truth and the *Upanishad* is also well-established by the supreme divine goal Sankara mentioned

विषयस्य विशिष्ट उक्तो विद्यायाः परं ब्रह्म प्रत्यगात्मभूतम् । प्रयोजनशास्त्राया उपनिषद् आत्यन्तिकी ससारनिवृत्तिब्रह्मप्राप्तिलक्षणा । सम्बन्धश्चैवम्भूतप्रयोजनेनोक्त । अतो यथोक्ताधिकारि-विषय-प्रयोजन-सम्बन्धाया विद्याया करतलन्यस्तामल्लवत् प्रकाशकरत्वेन विशिष्टाधिकारि-विषय-प्रयोजन-सम्बन्धा एता वल्लयो भवन्तीति ।

The *Katha Upanishad* belongs to the recension (*shakha*) of the vedic *Katha* community. The Vedas are four in number, and they are Rik, Sama, Yajuh, and Atharva. But these four Vedas are divided into different recensions (*shakhas*) according to different vedic branches connected with different clans. Though the real aim and object of the various clans and communities were to perform the religious rites (*shastras*) and sacrifices (*yajnas*), yet their *mantras*, their methods and materials of offerings of the oblations and their particulars of performances were different from one another. Again from the evidences of the Vedas and the Brahmanas we know that each clan and community adopted different meters *mantras*, texts and injunctions of the Vedas, suitable to their purpose. Different grammars were composed for the different Vedic recensions and they were known as the *Shukshas* and the *Pratishakhya*s. The portion of the Vedas which describes the rituals and ceremonies, is called the *karmakanda*, and that which teaches renunciation, discrimination or discrimination or discriminative

knowledge and the nature of the highest Truth, is called the *jnana-kanda*. The *Upanishads* are mainly included in the spiritualistic portion (*jnana-kanda*) of the Vedas. It should be remembered that each Veda and the *upa*-Veda contain different *Upanishads*.

The *Upanishads* form the foundation of the Vedanta philosophy in India. Sadananda Yati says in the *Vedantasara* that the name *Upanishad* signifies 'Vedanta' as—"*vedantonm-upanishadpramanam*", and the *Sutras* by Vyasa and the *Shariraka-bhasya* by Sankara are helpful to the study of the *Upanishads*. "*tadupakarini sharirakasutradini cha*" Swami Abhedananda says that in the *Upanishads* you will find the germs of the beautiful philosophy of Vedanta. The *Upanishads* are like the grapes and the Vedanta philosophy is like the essence squeezed out of those grapes. The Vedanta philosophy is based upon the teachings of the *Upanishads*, but the Vedanta philosophy is more systematised and rational. The *Upanishads*, being the revealed truths of the ecstatic visions of the vedic Rishis, are very simple and sublime.

The *Katha Upanishad* relates the story and dialogues of Nachiketa and Yama, the Ruler of Death, and through their dialogues we come to know the mystery of the afterworld (*parloka*), law of *karma*, the destiny of men, and of all the living beings the Providence, the absolute Truth and its undying nature, renunciation and love for knowledge and truth. The *Katha Upanishad* begins with the story which may not be out and out historical, but it explains the nature of faith and reason of the human beings, their spiritual hunger and also their highest aim of life. Nachiketa was a rare questioner and student, and Yama, the Ruler of Death, was a unique spiritual teacher. Nachiketa was a real seeker after truth, and he was strictly cross-examined by the self-realized teacher, the Ruler of Death. The Ruler of Death enquired whether Nachiketa wanted the pleasures of the delusive world, or the permanent pleasure and peace of the Divine realization, and when he came to know that Nachiketa was really a seeker after the absolute Truth and the eternal happiness, then he sanctioned his long-cherished boons, and opened his spiritual eyes for transparent vision of the self-revealing Brahman-knowledge. Nachiketa was repeatedly tempted by the Ruler of Death, but



was not moved by any of his masters temptations, and so he succeeded in receiving the blessings of the Ruler of Death, and that blessings enabled him to drink deep the nectar of immortality, and to escape eternally from the cycle of delusion

The beautiful story of Nachuketa and Yama further teaches us that whosoever becomes a sincere soul, or whosoever renounces everything for the sake of the highest Truth, is suited to get the fruitful consequence and his life's mystery is solved once for all, and he becomes the living God on this earth. Every man should be free from the fear of death and he should remember that this material body is the temple of God, the Absolute. His duty will be to reach God, the Absolute and not to be attached to the temple, the body. His longing and aspiration will be to realize the innermost essence, and not to wander about the outward world. Yama, the Ruler of Death, realized himself the absolute Truth, and so it was possible for him to grant so easily Nachuketa's cherished boon. In the *Upanishad*, it has been said that he who is Brahman himself, can only confer the blessings of the Brahman, and none else. So all seekers of Truth should approach first the realized Guru, and then be sincere in his asking of the highest Truth.

Swami Abhedananda was the direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. He sat at the holy feet of his wonderful Master, and got the key to unlock the mystery of the immortal life and celestial bliss. Being a man of Divine realization, the Swami's writings and speeches breathe the air of spiritual thoughts and ideas that animate and elevate the level of consciousness of all human beings. He has represented the central philosophy of the *Katha Upanishad* in a very beautiful way and in lucid language. He has discussed about the subjects like the changeable and unchangeable aspects of the world and the Absolute, the knowledge of the Absolute, the ego and the true self, the ego, self and sensation, the divine element in us, the realm of immortality, unity in variety, the purification of the soul, the oneness amidst the manifold, the phenomenal universe and the Brahman, and the beginning of the realization. These are the central ideas and the essence of all the philosophies of both the East and the West, and all the seekers after Truth of all the countries of the world are absolutely concerned with

these vital questions and problems to be solved in their religious and spiritual life

Viewing from the phenomenal standpoint Swami Abhedananda has said that this world of thoughts and deeds bears a pragmatic value and importance in the lives of them who live, move and have their beings in it, but from the transcendental viewpoint the world of appearance has no value except its ground, the *Atman*, which pervades and permeates the world "*isha vasyam idam sarvam yat kincha jagatyam jagat*" The Advaita Vedanta philosophy says that this phenomenal world is constituted out of space, time and causation, which are the categories of nescience or *maya* and, therefore, the world of phenomena is subject to change. So, while describing the unreality of the relative existence of the phenomenal world, Swami Abhedananda says "Within the realm of this duality, we cannot find anything that is absolutely unchangeable and permanent. This relative existence is subject to change. How far does this relative existence extend? It extends as far as there is space, and as far as there is time, and that which is absolute or unchangeable, is not within the realm of time and space, but it transcends them both (Chapter IV)

While discussing about time and space in *An Introduction to Transcendental Logic*, Immanuel Kant has described them as the *pure intuitions*, because, according to Kant, time and space as the pure intuitions are independent of the nature of the perceived objects, whereas the empirical intuitions like red, white, extension, solidity, etc., are the actual objects of perception. Kant has interlinked intuitions with the concepts, which are also divided into two, pure and empirical. According to Kant, an intuition is only a mental image, and time and space are the pure intuitions which are the mental products, and are directly apprehended by the mind itself. The Advaita Vedanta philosophy considers the mind or *Antahkarana* as the internal organ, so time and space, according to the followers of Advaita Vedanta, are the objects of senses, and, therefore, time and space are not absolutely independent of the nature of the perceived objects, as Kant holds. The Vedanta philosophy further recognizes time and space as the categories of nescience or *maya*, and, therefore, they have decay and change.

Swami Abhedananda has defined time and space in a new

and novel way. He says "Now, what is time and space? Time is nothing but that interval which exists between two ideas. One idea arises in our mind, and another idea follows it, and that succession or the interval between the two ideas is called 'time. Space means co-existence'. That is, if you think of yourself as standing or sitting here and think at the same time of some other point which is outside of yourself, and if you hold these two thoughts, that which separates them, is called 'space'. Consequently time and space both depend upon the existence of our mental condition (Chapter IV). So we find that though time and space are purely the psychic contents (space is recognized sometimes as a psycho-material content) and are perceived by the mind, yet they are considered as the phenomenal ones, being the inherent ingredients of the phenomenal universe. Swami Abhedananda has said that when you analyse in that way, you find "that everything in the phenomenal world is within time and space, but if you can go beyond time and space, you rise above your mental states. So long as there is time, there is space, there is the mental activity on the phenomenal plane and if you rise above time and space, you come to the absolute reality that is unconditional and that has neither beginning, nor end" (Chapter IV). In truth, if we even imagine the existence of time and space in the Absolute or the *Atman*, then the *Atman* will fall short of its transcendent nature, and will be an object of the sense perceptions like a gross material object. But the Vedanta philosophy says that the *Atman*, or the Brahman, is not apprehended by any sense, nor even by intellect or reason, but is experienced by the supersensible divine feeling or intuition (*anubhuti*), which is absolutely devoid of the tripartite principles of the knower (*jñata*), the knowledge (*jñana*) and the known (*jñeya*). The *Katha Upanishad* calls it the only existent something—"astityekopalabdhvayam" and "naita vacha na manasa praptum shakya no chakshusha".

Swami Abhedananda says that the *Katha Upanishad* has given an explanation of the realm of immortality which transcends the limits of time, space and causality, and that immortal realm is the *Atman*, where there remains no nescience or *maya*. The *Katha Upanishad* has compared this charming phenomenal world with a fig tree (*Ashvattha-vriksha*—*Ficus Indica*) which has its root upward and branches downwards "urdhamulo'ak-

*shakha esho'shvatthah sanatanah*", i.e. this fig tree of the phenomenal universe is not destructible and impermanent, but is everlasting and eternal. But the very word *vriksha* connotes the idea of impermanence (*anitya*), and it appears as permanent for its all-pervading immortal and eternal root (*mula*), the *Atman* or Brahman. The Advaita Vedanta philosophy also says about the nature of the phenomenal world as *anadi kintu shanta*, i.e., eternal, but limited. Swami Abhedananda says 'In other words, those who can see the root of this tree of the phenomenal universe and, instead of being attracted by the flowers and fruits and leaves and branches, can go to the root or source and are able to reach the plane of immortality' (Chapter XVI). Now what does the nature of immortality or immortal life signify? This question was asked by Nachiketa, the seeker after the real Self, and this is also the vital question of all the seekers after Truth of all the nations of the world. The Swami says that the *Atman*, or the Brahman, is the nature of the unchangeable absolute Reality, and it remains perfect and unchangeable amidst all the changes of the phenomenal universe. "After the dissolution of the phenomenal universe," says Swami Abhedananda, "everything will remain latent in the seed form. Our bodies may be reduced to their elements, to atoms, and molecules, and to forces of nature. Our souls, however, will remain perfect, or remain intact, and will not be annihilated, or dissolved, or destroyed, but will continue to exist, and retain all the powers and desires and tendencies, which they possess \* \*". The vedantic idea is this that after the dissolution (*pralaya*) everything of the universe remains latent in seed form in the womb of the *Prakriti*, the primordial energy, and this eternal *Prakriti*, or the undifferentiated consciousness (*Avyakta*), together with the prime consciousness is the self-shining pure Brahman and is known as *Ishvara*, who co-exists with the causal nescience and at the same time transcends it. When evolution begins, the latent seeds of the universe are manifested first in the subtle form and then in the gross form. The subtle form of the phenomenal universe is known as the *Hiranyagarbha* (-Brahman), and the gross form of it is known as the *Virata*, and they are known as the assuming second and first principles. *Ishvara* is known as the so-called third principle, and the *nishkala* (partless)

*śuddha* (pure) Brahman is known as the assuming fourth principle. In fact, the transcendent Brahman is absolutely raised above the category of the fourth principle, as this assuming category of the fourth principle is recognized as no other than an element of the nescience or *māya*, whereas the absolute Brahman transcends the limit of *māya*. This transcendent Brahman is the only desirable object (*śreyah*) to be obtained or achieved, and all other objects (*preyas*), other than the absolute Brahman, should be shunned or rejected. Nachiketa realized this truth very well, and so he rejected all the boons other than the boon of the knowledge of the Brahman (*brahmaṇana*).

In the Chapter XVII of this book, while explaining the secret of the world as the result of the vibrations '*yaḥudam kincha jagat sarvam prana ejaṁ nihsritam*', Swami Abhedananda says that all the animate and inanimate objects of the universe are nothing but the result or product of the vibrations of the *prana*, or vital force. These vibrations of the *prana* are at the root of the tree of the changing universe, and are also the cause of the world-appearance. The *Upanishad* says that this *prana* is the cosmic life-principle, and it produces the motion or vibration of creation or projection (*śṛṣṭi*). Now this *prana* has been described in the Vedānta philosophy as Hiraṇyagarbha-Brahman, who creates, nay, projects everything from within. All the impressions (*samskāras*) of the past incarnation of every being and object remain buried in the subconscious bed of the *Avyakta* or the undifferentiated consciousness, and when necessary, Hiraṇyagarbha-Brahman projects them as before "*sūrya chandramasau dhātā yathā purvama kalpayat*" (Rig Veda). The seekers after Truth also approach to the absolute indeterminate (*nirguṇa*) Brahman first from Virāṭa to Hiraṇyagarbha, then from Hiraṇyagarbha to *Isvara*, and then from *Isvara* (determinate or *saguna* Brahman) to the indeterminate Brahman. This gradual progress towards the highest Brahman can be said to be three paths of the spiritual illumination, known as dualism, qualified non-dualism and non-dualism or monism.

Swami Abhedananda says that philosophy and religion of the *Katha Upanishad* teach to concentrate the mind which will lead to the attainment of Godconsciousness, the be all

and end-all of all the human beings But for the attainment of that highest and noblest Truth, an able self-realized teacher or *Guru* is required, and Nachiketa was fortunate to get the Ruler of Death (Yama) as his self-realized spiritual preceptor or *Guru* The *Katha Upanishad* (1 27, 5) says,

श्रवणायापि बहुभिर्यो न लभ्य शृण्वन्तोऽपि बहवो य न विद्युः ।

अद्वयौ वक्ता कुशलोऽस्य लब्ध्वाऽश्वर्यो ज्ञाता कुशलानुशिष्ट ॥

That is, of that, which is not attained for mere hearing by many, and which many do not know even while hearing (the teachings of the self-knowledge), the expounder or teacher is wonderful and the receiver or student or disciple is wonderful, and wonderful is he who knows (the knowledge of the Self), being instructed by a proficient realized teacher Otherwise living in the midst of ignorance (*'avidyayamantare vartamanah'*) and considering themselves intelligent and wise, the senseless ignorant people go round and round, following the crooked courses, just like the blind led by the blind (*'andhenava nuyamana yathandhak'*) Really when a blind man is led by another blind man on an uneven road, it happens that both of them come to a great calamity, both of them fall into a ditch So those who have not attained to the self-realization (*atmajnana*) and live in the darkness of ignorance, cannot show the path of immortality So in the field of spiritual practice (*adhyatma sadhana*) all kinds of blind faith, sentiment, and prejudice should be abandoned and the help of a real self-realized teacher or *Guru* should be sought for entering into the eternal abode of self-realization Because the wise ones describe the path to self-realization to be inaccessible as razor's edge, which when sharpened, is difficult to tread on "*kshurasya dhara nishita duratyaya, durgam pathastat kavayo vadantu*" So he who thirsts for the super-sensible divine knowledge of the Self or *Atman*, should be very cautious to tread on the path of immortality The deluded ones see always the outer things and not the inner or indwelling Self, and the senses are always outgoing by their nature (*paranchi khani*), so a rare discriminating man, desiring for immortality, turns his eyes away and then sees the indwelling Self Therefore, we shall not be deluded by the fleeting show of the world-appearance

The fleeting enjoyment and happiness of the material world seen however sweet and pleasing at the outset, but in future they bring unto men bondage and suffering. So we shall concentrate our mind upon the *Atman*, meditate upon it, and shall enter into the state of superconsciousness (*samadhi*), to realize the Self that shines as one without the second. The *Katha Upanishad* says that whosoever will follow the path of Nachiketa, will attain to the same goal of the Self-knowledge, *anyo pyevam ye vidadhyatmameva*", and whosoever will realize the absolute Brahman as eternal within his heart, will become immortal in the end, and will transcend the realm of death.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### GREAT SAVIOURS OF THE WORLD

*Great Saviours of the World* was delivered serially in the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences of New York sometimes from 1907 to 1911 before the talented audience of America. The word 'saviour' has been used here to its broad and universal sense, which should not be confounded with the orthodox Christian conception of a saviour who saves the sinners from the eternal perdition.

The principal aim and object of these recordful and illuminative lectures are to show that the fundamental teachings or sayings of the founders of all great religions of the world have had the same religious and spiritual keynotes and that the stories and annals, connected with the eventful divine lives and miraculous deeds are analogous. Furthermore it has been demonstrated in this volume that the universal religion of Vedanta embraces the teachings of all the saviours of the world and harmonizes all other sectarian religions or religious creeds. It is to note further that the short sketches of the lives of the saviours, included in this volume, are based upon the authentic historical records and accounts, gathered by different scholars from various sources.

Now it can be asked as to what is the utility of the lives and teachings of the world-teachers or saviours? To this it can be said that though all men are possessed of intelligence and discriminative faculty, yet those qualities are not manifested in all, for which men cannot discriminate the real from the unreal and, in most cases, they fall short of their real vision and right knowledge and are, consequently, liable to suffer. So they need some mediums or means which will help them and direct them to the right path. The saviours are like the guiding stars that lead all towards right destination. The saviours and the messengers of God are the bright examples before the world, and if men follow them and follow the ennobling thoughts and deeds of the saviours they can mould their lives and characters which will enlighten them and rescue them from the den-



of delusion

*Great Saviours of the World* contains eleven illuminating recordful chapters dealing with divine lives and teachings of Sri Krishna, Zoroaster, Lao-Tze, Gautama Buddha, Christ, Mohammed and Ramakrishna. In the chapter one, an introductory discussion has been given to show that Divinity dwells on the topmost crest of the spiritual wave of humanity. Whoever reaches the summit, he is transformed by that self-effulgent light from the human into the divine being, and is regarded as a God-man, a divine messenger, or a saviour of the world. Swami Abhedananda says that, according to Vedanta, the universe moves in cycles of wave forms, and these waves of evolution rise, reach their zenith, and gradually subside to rise again in the form of another wave. This cycle of evolution is to be found in the physical, mental, moral or ethical and spiritual planes of the universe. If we study the history of humanity, we will find that nation after nation has risen, reached the climax of progress of culture and civilization, and has gradually passed into oblivion, making room for others to rise. But always we notice that on the highest plane of spiritual evolution of mankind, there is a shining and guiding soul, a prophet, a saviour, or a divine incarnation.

All the saviours or prophets are recognized as the divine messengers of God the merciful, and all of them are commissioned by the Almighty to deliver their messages to the people among whom they live. They are adorned with good and uncommon qualities and powers, and do everything for the good of humanity, establish righteousness, and destroy evil. Swami Abhedananda says that for the need of time and the people, Sri Krishna came as a saviour among the Hindus. About 660 B.C. the prophet Zoroaster appeared among the Iranians, the ancient inhabitants of Persia and preached among the people the spiritual teachings. About the same time there arose in China, Lao-Tze, and Confucious. In India, there came the great saviour in the form of Gautama Buddha, and founded the Buddhist faith. Until six hundred years after Jesus the Christ, Mohammed appeared as a prophet of Islam and gave the Arabian people the gospel of truth. About the same time, the Hindus needed a re-adjustment or a re-establishment of an universal truth and there appeared, in South India,

Sankaracharya and Ramanuja, and in North India, Sri Chaitanya. There came also the messengers and commentators, Madhva, Nimvarka, Vallabha, and others. Now, these great ones are recognized as the prophets, messengers, incarnations or saviours of the humanity. As for example the Swami says, Moses, Confucius and Mohammed are called as the prophets of the Lord, Zoroaster and Lao-Tze as the messengers of God, and Sri Krishna, Gautama Buddha, Christ, Sankaracharya, and Sri Ramakrishna are classed as the saviours of the world. But each of them had a divine mission, and each one set an example of purity, unselfishness, divine wisdom and disinterested love for all.

Swami Abhedananda has raised in this connection a question as to who is the real or true preacher of universal religion. He has said that each prophet or messenger is commissioned by God as the true preacher, because each one of them was an embodiment of Divinity. But when we will think anyone as a preacher of any religion, we must judge from our common sense, or from our reasoning faculty, about his ability and fitness of a preacher. The Swami says that the real preacher of the universal religion is one who has seen God and realized God, the Absolute, in his divine vision and who really lives the life of a God-man. But such a man or preacher is very rare. "If you ask me whether I have seen God, I will answer 'He that hath seen the Son, hath also seen the Father'." The latest manifestation of Divinity was in the form of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna. Him I have seen, therefore, I have seen God, and through Him, I have realized Buddha, Christ, Chaitanya, Krishna, and other great prophets and saviours."

In the second chapter, the Swami has discussed about the uncommon life and teachings of Sri Krishna who sang a universal song of the *Bhagavad Gita* in the battle of Kurukshetra in the epic age. The life of Sri Krishna was historical as the life of Jesus the Christ. Swami Abhedananda has forwarded here various references and evidences in support of the historicity of Sri Krishna, and has quoted, in this connection, Prof. Lassen, Captain Wilford, Authur Lily, Sir William Jones, Sir Godfrey Higgins, Bankim Chandra Chatterji, Prof. Bhandarkar, Dr. W. H. Mill and others. He has also depicted a mytho-historical picture of Sri Krishna quoting references from the

*Mahabharata*, the *Harivamsha*, the *Puranas*, and the *Bhagavad Gita* Regarding Sri Krishna's unparalleled character and sayings, the Swami says that in the life of Krishna, there is to be remarked a most wonderful combination of both divine and human qualities. Sri Krishna showed by his actions that noble qualities reached perfection in him. 'Nowhere do we find another example of perfect embodiment of all moral, spiritual and godly attributes which were manifested in the character of Krishna.' \* \* No other incarnation, neither Buddha, nor Christ, can take the place of Krishna, because neither of them could harmonize God and the world, and neither of them could set as highest an example in social, political, ethical and spiritual ideas as was done by this world-redeemer (Krishna)." Sri Krishna as an expounder of the *Bhagavad Gita* established the fatherhood of one omnipotent personal God, and taught peace, charity, and love for humanity. He taught a synthetic *sadhana* which harmonized Yoga, Karma, Jnana and Bhakti and removed all the antagonistic ideas in the field of religio-philosophical thoughts of India.

In the third chapter, Swami Abhedananda deals with life and teachings of Zoroaster, the prophet of the ancient Iranians. Zoroaster lived about 6,000 B C, and others maintain that he was born in Bactria about 12,000 B C. The Swami says that his actual historical time cannot be earlier than the middle of the seventh century B C. Zoroaster was a direct descendant of the real line of the house of Manuscheihar. His father's name was Pourushaspa and mother's name was Dughdhova, and it is said that his native place was the district of Atropatene or Adarbajan.

Zoroastrianism, as preached by Zoroaster, teaches that Ahura Mazda created man and gave him his body and mind. Man cannot do anything alone by his will and intellect without the grace of the Lord. Zoroastrianism is a religion of absolute faith, implicit confidence and unswerving devotion to Ahura Mazda. The Swami says that it is like Bhakti Yoga or path of devotion in the dualistic phase of the universal religion of Vedanta. It teaches constant prayers, offerings, sacrifices and thanksgivings by the devotee to the Lord.

In 1907, in the Art Gallery of the Brooklyn Institute of America, Swami Abhedananda also delivered a lecture on

Zoroaster and His Teachings (vide *The Brooklyn Eagle*, January 9, 1907) Dr A V Williams Jackson of the Columbia University was present at that lecture. The Swami said that at 30, Zoroaster had the Divine light of revelation and entered into the spiritual life as a Saviour, having visions which he translated into rules of life.

The fourth chapter deals with the life and teachings of Lao-Tze. In China, three religions or religious faiths are predominant and they are Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism. Confucianism and Taoism were indigenous, while Buddhism was introduced from India in the year 65 A.D. The prophets like Confucius and Lao-Tze were the founders of religions of Confucianism and Taoism. Both of these prophets lived at the same time in sixth century B.C. These two prophets are regarded as Krishna and Buddha of India, and their religions imbibed the spirit of India to some extent. The teachings of Lao-Tze are contained in the book which he wrote himself in the sixth century B.C. The name of his book was *Tao-Teh-King*, given by the Emperor Ching of the Han Dynasty (156-143 B.C.). The term 'Tao' connotes the idea of 'The Way', and some are of opinion that Tao means the Eternal Word or 'Logos' or the 'Eternal Being'. Again some call it the 'Reason' or 'Nature'. The Buddhists use the term 'Tao' as an embodiment of enlightenment. But the literary meaning of the word 'Tao' is the 'Way' or 'Method' which leads men to divine light or enlightenment.

Lao-Tze taught that Tao is one and unique, and is immutable and eternal. It is nameless and indescribable like the Brahman of Advaita Vedanta. Lao-Tze called it the mysterious abyss of existence (*satta*) and is, therefore, the mother or matrix of the world appearance. It existed before God, and, therefore, it created God which is known in Vedanta as *Isvara*, the personal God or the *saguna* Brahman, the first and causal manifestation of the Brahman. Swami Abhedananda says that as in Advaita Vedanta the individualized soul is known as the *jivatman*, so Tao or the Way of Heaven, when individualized, is known as the Way of Man, but, in truth, or in essence, the Way of Heaven and the Way of Man are one and the same. The *Tao-Teh-King*, written by Lao-Tze, says that man takes law from the earth, the earth takes law from the Heaven, the

Heaven takes law from the Tao, and Tao takes its law what it is in itself. There Tao is not merely an abstract principle, but is the object of awe and reverence. Swami Abhedananda says that as the Brahman, or the Absolute, is the cornerstone of philosophy and religion of Vedanta, so Tao, the Absolute and eternal One, is the fundamental principle of philosophy and religion of Lao-Tze. Tolstoi was greatly influenced by the religious and philosophical ideas or thoughts of Lao Tze. In fact, Lao-Tze's religion, Taoism, did not begin to be a popular religion until after the introduction of Buddhism in China, and it is a fact that Taoism borrowed many things from Buddhism. As for example, like Buddhism, the modern Taoism incorporated the Triratna of the Buddhists, Buddha, Dharma and Samgha, which took the names of the Perfect Holy One, the Highest Holy One and the Greatest Holy One. Like Buddhism, Taoism had its monks and nuns who wore yellow caps. It also borrowed from Buddhism the ideas of a Purgatory and of reward and punishment after death, as also the idea of rebirth or reincarnation. But Lao-Tze believed in the immortality of the soul, and said that realization of the Tao through self-conquest or self-control is the attainment of salvation or *mukti*.

In the fifth chapter, Swami Abhedananda deals with life and teachings of Gautama Buddha. The word 'Buddha' implies the idea of 'Divine Enlightenment' or 'Wisdom', and Prince Siddhartha was named after Buddha when he attained to divine wisdom through severe penance. Buddha's father was King Shuddhodana and mother's name was Maya Devi, the daughter of Suprabuddha. In the year 624 B.C., on the day of the full moon in the month of Vaisakha, while in the garden of Lumbini, under a satin tree, Maya Devi gave birth to a perfect child who was afterwards known as the saviour Gautama Buddha, the founder of Buddhism.

Prince Siddhartha renounced his home and hearth and became the Sannyasin at the age of twenty-nine. Swami Abhedananda writes "Shakya Muni Bodhisattva parted from Bimbisara as a friend and went out of Rajagriha, the capital of Magadha, in search of remedy for misery, sorrow, disease and death, which prevailed in the world. He went to Vaisali and placed himself under the spiritual guidance of a great

Brahmin philosopher Arada Kalama who had a large number of followers. He belonged to the *Sankhya* school of Kapila and laid great stress on the belief in a permanent and eternal Soul, the *Atman*. Arada Kalama taught Bodhisattva that the goal of perfect freedom and immortal life is reached in this path. But Bodhisattva found no satisfaction in this path or doctrine. So he left Arada Kalama and placed himself under the guidance of another Brahmin teacher, Udraka Ramaputra who belonged to the *Vaisheshika* school of Kanada. He accepted the truth of law of *karma* and analyzed the *skandas* that construct the stuff of personality. But this doctrine did not give him satisfaction, so he went to the temple priests and asked them the way of salvation. His gentle and compassionate heart was horrified at the sight of the cruel sacrifice of the innocent animals on the altars of the gods for the expiation of sins. He believed in the creeds of non-killing and *ahimsa*. He then went in search of a better system of spiritual practice towards Uruvela, the modern Bodhi Gaya. There in the jungle of Uruvela he met five Bhikshus, headed by Kaundinya, who were the disciples of Udraka. Bodhisattva was pleased to see their penance and severe austerity for controlling desires and passions. He also took the vow of that penance and for six years he continued to torture his body without food and clothes. His body was gradually reduced to skeleton, but he did not find any real peace and happiness in that severe austerity. He was so weak that he was unable to move his legs and limbs, and came to know that it is not the right path to get into real salvation. He then took hold of a tree nearby and tried to raise himself up, but he fell down and was unconscious for a long time. At this time Sujata happened to pass by the spot where Bodhisattva was swooned. She offered Bodhisattva the rice-milk or *payasa*, which he ate and felt strong enough to come back to his seat of penance. He then selected the middle path (*madhyama pantha*) and absorbed himself in deep meditation under the shade of the Bodhi tree. At this time he was tempted by Mara, the embodiment of desires and passions, and he successfully conquered it, and sat cross-legged under the Bo-tree on the banks of the Niranjana and attained Nirvana or the cessation of desires which is really the attainment of permanent tranquil peace. Such is the story of Buddha's attain-

ment of Nirvana, and Swami Abhedananda has described it graphically while dealing with the life of the saviour, Gautama Buddha

३१ सत्त्व रजस तमो भूतानि तेषां

After attaining to *sambuddhatva*, Bodhisattva Buddha realized his own religion which was founded upon the four noble truths, and he preached them to the world. His *sambuddhatva* contained the central idea of Nirvana which was positive and not negative. Swami Abhedananda has described the basic ideas of the four noble truths which lead to Nirvana. The first noble truth is the existence of suffering and sorrow. The second noble truth is the cause of suffering. The third noble truth is cessation of sorrow which means the state of Nirvana. The fourth noble truth is attached with the eight-fold path that also lead to Nirvana. The eight-fold path is (1) right comprehension, (2) right resolution, (3) right speech, (4) right acts, (5) right way of earning a livelihood, (6) right efforts, (7) right thoughts, (8) right state of peaceful mind.

Swami Abhedananda says that religion, preached by Buddha, may be said to be an outgrowth of the *Sankhya* philosophy, as expounded by Kapila. Regarding the conception of Nirvana, the Swami says that after the death of Buddha and his direct disciples, the difficulty of understanding what he really meant by Nirvana, was felt keenly by his latter followers than ever before. So there arose different controversial meanings or interpretations of Nirvana. The Swami has discussed those different interpretations, and has said that Nirvana really expresses the idea of suchness or thatness (*tathata*), and that ever-existent thatness is like the *Atman* of the *Upantishad*. But Buddha himself has not said anything about the nature of Nirvana, as he kept absolute silence during his *parinirvana*.

In the sixth chapter, Swami Abhedananda deals with the life and teachings of Christ. In fact, he has devoted four chapters on discussions on Christ and they are *Christ and his Teachings*, *Christ and Christians*, *Vedanta and the Teachings of Jesus* and *Did Christ teach a new Religion*. The Swami says that in the fullness of time, the miraculous conception of the Virgin Mary took place and on the 25th of December Christ was born in Bethlehem. Christ was the only begotten Son of the Heavenly Father. This version has been given by the Matthew, but the Luke narrator has given a different version. In the

Apocryphal Gospel, various miracles of Jesus have been described, and these miracles were played by Jesus when he was twelve years old. The life of Jesus was unknown when he was eighteen years old. When he was about thirty years old he was baptised and the Holy Ghost descended from the heaven in the shape of a dove and said "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Then he appeared before the public. When he was preaching in Jerusalem, he was betrayed by one of his disciples. He instituted the memorial supper, and then was crucified, having made a full confession of his Membership before Pontius Pilate. After three days he resurrected and appeared alive before his disciples.

The Swami says that Jesus proved to the world by his glorious works that he was the embodiment of purity and righteousness and that he was the personification of divine wisdom and powers. The disinterested love for humanity, shown by Jesus, was unique. He really accepted the ideal of Vedanta, and lived the life of a Yogi (the Swami has discussed in his book, *How to be a Yogi* that Christ practised the yogic *sadhana*). Like Krishna, Buddha and other saviours, Jesus the Christ attained to Godconsciousness and he realized the intimate relation which exists between the individual soul and the heavenly Father.

The seventh chapter deals with Christ and the Christmas. Swami Abhedananda has discussed in this chapter different opinions that were formed around the question of date of birth of Christ as well as of the Christmas. He has discussed the orthodox Christian belief, the description of the Apocryphal Gospel, the opinions of the higher critics of the Bible, the opinions of Eusebius, the first ecclesiastical historian (260-340 A.D.), Irenaeus (190 A.D.), Rev. Dr. Giles, Rev. Dr. Geikie, Canon Farrar, Mr. Bunsen, Rev. Mr. Gross, Saint Chrysostom, Dr. Hooykaas, the historian Gibbon and others. Besides, he has given many evidences of religious functions, observed in different Churches of different countries. The Swami has said that though there are some controversies regarding the date of birth of Christ yet the Latin churches celebrate the Christmas festival on the 25th of December, the Greek churches celebrate twelve days after that, and the American churches twelve days later still. "If we go to Bethlehem, the home of the Christmas, we will see that this festival practically lasts for one month,



being celebrated by different Christian sects at different times" Further the Swami says "Now let us see why 25th of December was finally fixed as the birthday of Jesus \* \* The ancient Egyptians fixed 25th of March as the date when the saviour Horus descended from the womb of Isis, the Virgin Queen of Heaven \* \* Osiris, the son of the holy Virgin was born on the 25th December The Greeks celebrate the day as the birthday of Hercules Bacchus who was born on the 25th, and so Adonis Thus Hercules, Osiris, Bacchus, Adonis, Horus, Mithra, everyone of them was born of a Virgin mother on the 25th of December, the day after the winter solstice" The Swami has very scholastically surveyed the dates of birth of different gods and saviours of different nations and has concluded "thus according to ancient traditions of different countries and different nations, the Christians also fixed the date of birth of their saviour, Jesus the Christ on 25th of December"

The eighth chapter deals with 'Vedanta and Teachings of Jesus' Swami Abhedananda has said that ethically and spiritually teachings of Jesus are in complete harmony with the teachings of Vedanta, and the steps towards the attainment of spirituality are also identical, but Jesus spoke in parables, while Vedanta affords a rational foundation for ethics and religion.

The ninth chapter deals with 'Did Christ teach a new Religion' Swami Abhedananda says "As in India, Buddha rebelled against the ceremonials, rituals and priestcrafts of the Brahman and introduced a simple form of worship and religion of the heart, so among the Jews, nearly five hundred years after Buddha, Jesus of Nazareth rebelled against the priestcraft of Judaism" Now, when Jesus appeared in Galilee, the religious atmosphere of the place was permeated with Persian doctrines, Hellenic ideas, Pythagorean thoughts and the percepts of the Essences, Therapeutae, Gymnosophists and the Buddhists of India The Jews were already divided into three principal sects like the Sadducees, the Pharisees and the Essenees The Sadducees were conservative and aristocratic, while the Pharisees and Essenees were essentially liberal The Synoptic Gospel says that although the mind of Jesus was not absolutely free from the superstitious beliefs of the Jews and although Jesus was somewhat influenced by the then prevailing thoughts and ideas of different sects, yet he was liberal and

rational, and he preached the gospel of truth and peace. Swami Abhedananda has described here the peculiar doctrines and religious practices of the Buddhist monks, the Essenees and other sects, and has said that Jesus did not preach absolutely a new religion, but only it can be said that he gave a new life to the old truths.

The tenth chapter deals with life and teachings of Mohammed, the prophet of Islam. Mohammed was born in Mecca in the sixth century A.D. Mecca was the capital of Arabia. Swami Abhedananda has given a historical account of the Arabian country and nation, in which Mohammed was born. Mohammed was descended from the family of Cossai, the priest of Kaaba and the chief of the Korish tribe of Mecca. His father's name was Abdulla, and mother's name was Amina. Amina gave birth to Mohammed on the 20th August in the year 570 A.D. At the age of forty, Mohammed received divine inspiration and realized that he was the prophet of his people. In 630 A.D., he entered into Mecca commanding 10,000 followers, armed in battle array, took possession of Kaaba, destroyed the idols and triumphantly established the banner of Islam in the heart of Mecca. He changed by his teachings the character of the lawless Arab tribe and gave them law and justice. He preached the unity of God and unity of his prophet.

The eleventh chapter deals with life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna. The Swami says that on Wednesday the 17th of February, 1836 A.D.<sup>1</sup> Sri Ramakrishna was born at Kamarpukur in the district of Hooghly, West Bengal. His father's name was Kshudiram Chattopadhyay, and mother's name was Chandramani Devi. When Ramakumar, the elder brother of Ramakrishna (his earlier name was Gadadhar Chattopadhyay) came to Calcutta and accepted the post of a high priest in the temple of Kali (Bhavatarini) at Dakshineswar, Ramakrishna came with him and lived with him at Dakshineswar. Rama-

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<sup>1</sup> Roman Rolland mentioned in his book, *Prophets of the New India* (1928), that Sri Ramakrishna was born on February 18, 1836, (p. 8). But the date 17th February, 1836, as mentioned by Swami Abhedananda, is correct.

krishna was the lover of truth and freedom, and so Rani Rasmani and her son-in law Mathuramohan were attracted with the magnetic personality of Ramakrishna. Mathur Babu approached Ramakrishna and urged him to take the charge of worship of the Divine Mother, after his elder brother Ramakumar passed away. At first Ramakrishna disliked to take up the charge, but afterwards accepted the post of the priest of the Divine Mother, Bhavatarin.

However, the Swami has beautifully described the divine life of Sri Ramakrishna and has said that in this age of scientific rationalism, Sri Ramakrishna has shown to the world how the Lord of the universe can be realized and attained in this life, and no one except him has ventured to go through all the tests of sceptics and agnostics to prove that he had attained Godconsciousness. "Those who have seen and watched him day and night, have proclaimed before the world that he was the embodiment of highest spiritual ideals, given in all the scriptures of different nations of the world"

## CHAPTER XXV

### MEMOIRS OF RAMAKRISHNA

The *Memoirs of Ramakrishna* is a reprint with emendations and under a new title of the authorised American edition of the *Gospel of Ramakrishna*, first published in 1907 by the Vedanta Society in New York, of which Swami Abhedananda was the President. The *Gospel of Ramakrishna* was much appreciated in America and Europe. A Spanish edition also came out in 1945 from Buenos Aires in South America, and a Portuguese edition soon followed in Brazil. In Europe, the *Gospel of Ramakrishna* was translated in various languages like Danish, Scandinavian and Czechoslovak. This book also inspired the Austrian painter, Frank Dvorak, who afterwards made full-size portraits of both Sri Ramakrishna and Sri Sarada Devi, which are now installed in the temple of the Ramakrishna Vedanta Math, Calcutta.

The *Memoirs of Ramakrishna* can be said to be the modified *Ramakrishna-Kathamrita* in one volume with a new form and a new title, because Swami Abhedananda has practically translated in English all the volume of the Bengali *Kathamrita* (Volumes I to V) reproduced by "M" or Mahendra Nath Gupta (Master Mahashaya) and has avoided repetitions occurred in the original (Bengali) *Kathamrita*. In fact, the *Memoirs of Ramakrishna* is an anthology or a collection of the universal teachings of Bhagavan Ramakrishna Paramahansa, which, if followed, will lead to a perfect and peaceful life. Sri Ramakrishna was a God-intoxicated man. He realized the absolute Brahman which was the divine consummation of both the indeterminate and transcendent Brahman and the determinate immanent Brahman, i.e., the Brahman which assumes both the indeterminate (*nirguna*) and the determinate (*saguna*) aspects and at the same time transcends them both. Swami Abhedananda says that Sri Ramakrishna's mission is to proclaim the eternal and universal truth that though the Brahman is one and without the second (*ekam* and *advituyam*), yet He assumes many aspects and that same stupendous One is worshipped

by different nations under different names and forms "The present upheaval of the spiritual tide, the waves of which, traversing nearly half of the world, have touched the shores of America, was produced by the Christlike character and divine personality of Bhagavan Ramakrishna, revered and worshipped in India today as an ideal manifestation of the Divine glory"

Sri Ramakrishna realized the universal Truth and preached to the whole world his universal doctrine of *yata mata tata patha* i.e. 'as many faiths, so many practices' Now, in the light of his universal doctrine of *yata mata tata patha*, we find that the *isms* like *dvaita*, *vishvadvaita* and *advaita* are regarded as the *alternative* faiths in relation to three kinds of spiritual *sadhana*, which lead to the sincere seekers after Truth to one and the same Godconsciousness Sri Ramakrishna has not said to synthesise all the different *isms* (*vidyas*) and spiritual practices (*sadhanas*) into one, but has instructed all to follow any one of the *alternative* spiritual *sadhanas* to reach the ultimate goal It is also found from the marginal headings, made by Swami Abhedananda for the American edition of the *Memors or Gospel* that Sri Ramakrishna has dealt with the doctrines of *jnana*, *karma*, *yoga* and *bhakti*, and has said that these are the *alternative* religious or spiritual practices, and are not antagonistic to one another, but are suitable and helpful to different *Sadhakas* of different angles of vision and different faiths and tastes for reaching to one and the same destination or goal, which is the realization of the absolute Brahman

Now from the phenomenal standpoint Sri Ramakrishna has shown sometimes some differences between *jnana* and *vijnana*, between *jnana* and *bhakti*, between the indeterminate (*nirguna*) Brahman and the determinate (*saguna*) Brahman, etc As for example, when he has said about *jnana* and *vijnana*, he has mentioned about a distinction between *jnana* as an incomplete and general knowledge, and *vijnana* as a complete and special or universal knowledge, which can be termed as the *vishesa-jnana* and the *samanya-jnana*, as defined by the Nyaya philosopher of India While discussing about *jnana* and *vijnana*, Sri Ramakrishna has said that *jnana* leads to *vijnana* or *vishesa* (special) *jnana* He has given an illustration of the roof of a house and the stairs (*chad* and *shuri*) He has

said that when we climb or reach the roof of a house by the help of the stairs, we ordinarily say that the roof is higher than the stairs, but, in truth, the materials, out of which the roof and the stairs are constructed, are the same brick dusts and lime (*surki* and *chun*). The staircase is here regarded as *jñana* and the roof of the house, as *vijnana*, and though the roof appears as higher than the levels of the stairs, yet the materials of the two are one and the same. Similarly *jñana* ordinarily appears to be lower than, or inferior to, *vijnana* (*viśhesa-jñana*), but essentially they are one and the same knowledge or consciousness, as an individual soul (*jīva*) ordinarily appears different from the Brahman, but, in essence, is non-different from the Brahman. Acharya Sankara explained in his different writings that when one makes *vichara* of the *mahavakyas*, he realizes first in an individual way *aham brahmasmi* and then in an universal way *sarvam khalvidam brahman*, which has been compared in the *Isha Upanishad* as "*ishavasyam idam sarvam yatquicha jagatyam jagat*". Here the word 'then' means 'simultaneously' without a least difference of time. And it is also a rule or a common practice that in the way or process of Divine realization (though realization does not involve any process or disciplinary method, being self-revealing (*svayam-prakasha*) and self-shining (*svayam-jyoti*), individual consciousness (*vyasti* and *viśhesa-jñana*) like *aham brahmasmi* dawns first and then the universal one (*samasti* and *samanya-jñana*). From this it is evident that individual knowledge or consciousness is not different from universal knowledge or consciousness, as a spark of fire is not different from the pyre of fire. Regarding *jñana* and *vijnana*, Sri Ramakrishna says "*Jñana* is to know the *Atman* through the path of discrimination (*vichara*) like 'not this, not this' (*neti, neti*). When this discrimination leads to *samadhi*, the *Atman* is apprehended. But *vijnana* is a complete knowledge or realization. Some heard of milk, some have seen it, but others have tasted it. So with God. Those who have heard of Him, are still in ignorance, those who have seen Him, are the *Jnanis*, but those who have tasted or realized Him, are the *Vijnanis*. After seeing God when one makes acquaintance with Him and realizes Him as the nearest and dearest of all, then that is *vijnana*. At first it is necessary to discriminate 'not this, not this', i.e., God is not the element

of Nature, He is not senses or sense powers, He is not this mind, not this intellect, not this egoism, but is beyond all the categories of Nature. For reaching the roof, one must climb step by step, leaving one step after another. The staircase is the same as the roof, as after reaching the roof, however, one can easily see that both the roof and the staircase are of the same material. The same infinite Brahman appears as the personal God, *īva* and the twenty-four categories of Nature." Though this illustration of Śrī Ramakrishna seems to be somewhat different from the former one, yet it gives a clear idea of non-difference of *jñāna* and *vyñāna*.

Śrī Ramakrishna has admitted the existence of an eternal Energy which is known as Sakti or Kali, the Divine power of the absolute Brahman. He says that when right knowledge or Divine realization manifests, then it is known or felt that the eternal Energy or Sakti or Kali and the absolute Brahman (*śuddha Brahman*) are inseparable. If you admit the existence of fire, how can you deny its burning power (*dāhikā-sakti*), which is inseparable or non-different from fire? So one cannot think of fire without thinking of its burning power. Similarly we cannot think of the rays of the sun without thinking of the sun itself. "Therefore, no one can think of the Brahman as apart from Sakti. The eternal Energy is creating, preserving and destroying everything and that Energy is called Kali, the Divine Mother." Śrī Ramakrishna has further said that Kali is the Brahman, the Brahman is Kali, Kali and the Brahman are one and the same. "I call Him the Brahman when He is absolutely inactive, that is, when He neither creates, nor preserves, nor destroys the phenomena, but when He performs all such actions, I call Him Kali, the eternal Energy and the Divine Mother. So the absolute Brahman and the Divine Mother are one and the same Being, the difference is in their names and forms (*nama-rupa*), just as the same substance water is called by different names in different languages like *jal*, *pani*, *aqua*, water, etc."

In fact, Śrī Ramakrishna has not discarded any of the *isms* or doctrines, rather has regarded them as different paths or ways to reach the same goal. He says "The Advaita Vedantist discriminates by saying 'not this, not this' (*neti neti*), i.e., the absolute Brahman is not this, not that, not any finite

object, not the individual soul and not the external world. When as the result of this kind of reasoning (*vichara*) the heart ceases to be moved by desires, when, in fact, the mind is merged in the supreme state of superconsciousness, the absolute Brahman is reached or realized, which is one without the second (*ekamevadityam*). One who has truly attained to the *Brahmajnana*, realizes that Brahman or the Absolute alone is real and the world is unreal and that all names and forms (*nama-rupa*) are like unreal dreams. What the Brahman is, cannot be described by words of mouth, nor can one even say that He is personal. Such is the viewpoint of a non-dualist (*Advaitavadi*). Here Sri Ramakrishna has represented the correct view of Advaita Vedanta for the *Jnanis*.

He has further explained the doctrine of the qualified non-dualism (*vishvadvaitavada*) for the *Jnani-Bhaktas* who consider the Brahman as sum total of *Isvara*, *jiva* and the phenomena (*jagat*). The *Jnani-Bhaktas* maintain, says Sri Ramakrishna, that the Brahman is not to be considered as apart from the world (*jagat*) and the individual soul (*jiva*), but *Isvara*, *jiva* and *jagat*—these three come from one, three is one, and one is three. "Let us take a bel-fruit. Let the shell, the seeds and the kernel be kept separate. Now suppose someone wished to know the weight of the fruit. Surely it would not be sufficient to weigh the kernel alone. The shell, the seeds and the kernel are all weighed with a view to get the real weight of the Bel fruit. No doubt, we reason at the outset that the all-important thing is the kernel and not either the shell or the seeds. In the next place, we go on reasoning that the shell and the seeds belong to the same substance to which the kernel belongs." Here Sri Ramakrishna has truly represented the doctrine of *vishvadvaita*, as maintained and explained by Ramanuja and his followers. Sri Ramakrishna fully knows that all men and women are not of some taste and temperament, so different faiths and spiritual practices are necessary for them of different tastes to reach the same goal.

Similarly Sri Ramakrishna has supported the faiths and doctrines of the *Dvaitavadins*, *Saktivadins*, *Yogins* and others. While explaining the doctrine of the (dualistic) devotees and the lovers of personal God, he says that the *Dvaitavadins* do not consider this external world as an unreal dream, but they say



that this world is the glory of God. The individual souls are absolutely different from the all-merciful God, and they reach God through His mercy. In like manner, Sri Ramakrishna has supported the disciplines and practices of the Yogis who seek to commune with the infinite Spirit, the *Paramatman*. He says 'His (Yogi's) object is to bring the finite human soul into communion with the infinite Spirit. He tries first to collect his mind which is scattered in the external world of senses and seeks to fix or concentrate it on the universal Spirit'

Sri Ramakrishna believes that all religions and spiritual practices are true and all of them lead the sincere seekers after Truth to the abode of eternal peace and absolute freedom, and they differ only in their names and forms. So he instructs all neither to combine them into one, nor to synthesize them into one system, but to consider them as the *alternative* paths or methods to realize the same absolute *Atman* which is not limited by any definite religion, creed, or practice. Sri Ramakrishna says 'But all these various ideals (preached and reached by various religious faiths and practices) are of one and the same Reality or Brahman, the difference being only in the names. It is the same Being whom men call by the name of the Absolute (Brahman), the universal Spirit, the impersonal God, or the personal God with divine attributes'. Sri Ramakrishna's religion and philosophy, therefore, breathe a new trend of thought and a new spirit to bring a harmony among all nations of the world.

Swami Abhedananda has correctly depicted in the *Memoirs* the central idea and ideal of his beloved Master, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, in a very lucid language and fascinating style which go deep into the bottom of the heart of everyone and rouse the spiritual contents which, when realized bring everlasting peace and tranquility even in this mundane life.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### SAYINGS OF RAMAKRISHNA

*Sayings of Ramakrishna* is an anthology of the precepts and parables of the Prophet of Dakshineswar, recorded by one of His Apostles, Swami Abhedananda. These precepts and parables were first published by Swami Abhedananda from the New York Vedanta Society in 1903 and was warmly appreciated by peoples of Europe and America. It was reprinted in 1920 from the San Francisco Vedanta Ashrama with some new additions and corrections by the Swami. The readers will find in this anthology the divine utterances of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna, beautifully and systematically collected and compiled by His gifted disciple.

Sri Ramakrishna has said that men are born mainly of two tendencies, *vidya* and *avidya*. The *vidya* tendency leads men towards liberation or *mukti* and *avidya* tendency binds men with the worldly desires which are known as the chain of nescience or ignorance. "When born, both tendencies are in equilibrium like the scales of a balance. The world soon places its enjoyments and pleasures in one scale and the spirit and its attractions on the other, and if a man chooses the world, the worldly scale becomes very heavy and gravitates towards the earth, but if he chooses the spirit, the spiritual scale gravitates towards God." Swami Abhedananda says that Sri Ramakrishna's teachings are like the soft clay which easily takes a form of divine impressions and when a man comes in contact with those divine impressions, his mind is stained with the impressions and is purified and that purified mind prepares the ground of attaining Godconsciousness. Sri Ramakrishna's divine teachings were given in different occasions to different disciples and devotees for intensifying their desires of knowledge and wisdom and it is needless to mention that hundreds and thousands of seekers after Truth from different corners of the world have found the way of solving their mysteries of life by the help of those teachings.

In the precepts and parables, depicted by Sri Ramakrishna,

we find a spirit of amity and synthetic attitude that being harmony among all religions and all religious faiths, and lead all towards the ultimate goal which is realization of God, or the Absolute His sayings also harmonize the ideals of Yoga, Jnana, Karma and Bhakti, and teach that the spiritual aspirants shall select an alternative path or spiritual practice and strive hard to reach the goal

In the first chapter of the *Sayings of Ramakrishna*, Swami Abhedananda has discussed about God, His Divine attributes, His existence, His nature, etc He has said that though God has been conceived with form and without form, though God is both personal and impersonal and is meditated with attributes and without attributes, yet He is one with the absolute Brahman He has discussed about *maya* and the Brahman and has said that Sri Ramakrishna teaches that *maya*, according to Advaita Vedanta, is unreal, because it has no permanent or lasting existence, because it is relative and dependent and is removed with the dawn of the Divine light of God-realization The Swami says that Sri Ramakrishna has taught that God reveals Himself to the Sadhaka, if he resignates his petty self to the cosmic Self, the *Atman* or Brahman The worship of images of gods or goddesses is not fruitless, but helps the sincere seekers after Truth to see God face to face The images are the signs or symbols which direct to the real substance, God Patanjali said '*tasya vachakah pranava*' i.e. the *Pranava* (Omkaara) is the pointer or discloser of the real essence of the Brahman Sri Ramakrishna says "If a man thinks of the images of gods and goddesses as symbols of the Divinity, he reaches the Divinity" God is in everything and He lives in the heart of every living being

In the second chapter, Swami Abhedananda has dealt with the Saviours, the Sages and the spiritual Teachers Sri Ramakrishna says that the *Avataras* are the Incarnations of God They descend on earth and live in the world with all living beings and help them to realize their ultimate goal There are two classes of men, *Avatara* and *Siddha*, and there is a great distinction between them, as the *Avataras*, or the Saviours, incarnate and all are saved through His grace, whereas the *Siddhas*, or the emancipated souls, only save themselves with much pain and penance But it should be remembered that

human beings have no power to incarnate, but it is God alone who incarnates as the *Avatars* and saves the mankind.

The divine sages are like the inner circle of God's nearest relatives. They are like friends, companions, and kinsmen of the almighty God. They are great and noble because they are above egoism, narrowness, and shortsightedness. They are above worldly attachments. They realize the immortal *Atman* and live in this world of diversity like the dead leaves. Sri Ramakrishna emphasises that each man needs a spiritual teacher or *Guru* to lead him in the path of spirituality. The *Guru* is the self-realized man and can open the spiritual eyes of all who sincerely practise spiritual *sadhana*. He can make the disciples free from the chain of nescience.

In the third chapter, Swami Abhedananda deals with the spiritual life of a man. Sri Ramakrishna has said that the spiritual life of a man begins when he awakes from the slumber of ignorance and knows the real nature of both *maya* and the Brahman, and knowing difference between the changing nature of *maya* and the unchanging nature of the Brahman, he rejects the unreal and accepts the real. In fact, unreality is *maya* or nescience, as it deludes men and makes them forgetful of their essence and real existence. But Reality is the Truth or the Brahman-knowledge that dispels the darkness of ignorance and helps men to realize, nay, recognize their real nature and existence which are no other than the immortal *Atman*, or the absolute Brahman.

Sri Ramakrishna says that ordinary mortals are attached to lust and gold, because they think that those things will console them and will give them permanent happiness and comfort. But when they come to know the unreality of those changing phenomenal things are dispelled through discrimination and meditation, they try to remove the attachment of lust and gold and love God and make their life blessed by the realization of the all-blissful Brahman. Sri Ramakrishna repeatedly has instructed the worldly-minded men to take shelter under the sheds of discrimination and renunciation (*viveka* and *varagya*) which will purify mind and make mind shine with pure intelligence for appreciating the absolute Brahman. It is quite true that the absolute Brahman is beyond the reach of mind and intelligence (*mana-buddhir pare*), but Sri Ramakrishna says

that when mind is purified, i.e., transformed into *shuddha-buddhi* or pure intelligence, it shines like pure consciousness (*shuddha-jnana*) which apprehends or appreciates the all-consciousness Brahman (*"mana-buddhir agochara, kintu shuddha-maner gochara"*) Advaita Vedanta says that the Brahman is apprehended by the shining light of intelligence (*buddhi*) and it happens that when the Brahman is reflected in the mirror of intelligence,nescience, associated with intelligence, is removed or replaced by pure consciousnesses and the self-luminous and self-revealing lustre of the absolute Brahman shines in its own undying glory So Sri Ramakrishna instructs the neophyte to seek solitude and stillness for making silent the modifications (*vruttis*) of mind, for the pure in heart see God

Sri Ramakrishna has also explained the nature of the ascetics who renounce their hearth and home and dedicate their lives for the cause of God The *Siddhas*, the *Sadhus* and the *Sannyasins* are they who maintain in them the *sadhu-vruttis* or good thoughts and good deeds, and make their sole aim and object the absolute Brahman Concentration, meditation, and perseverance are necessary for attaining the Godconsciousness Resignation to the will of God and Divine grace are also essential for the realization of the Absolute Regarding Divine grace, Sri Ramakrishna has said that the wind of God's grace (*kripa-vatasa*) is incessantly blowing Lazy sailors on this sea of life do not take advantage of it, but the active and the able always keep their minds unfurled to catch the friendly breeze and thus reach their destination very soon As fans are discarded when the wind blows, so prayers and penances are discarded when the Divine grace of God descends But sometimes men depend upon *adrishta* or Providence neglecting *purushakara* But that is not correct, because *adrishta* has a definite limit, whereas *purushakara* is limitless and by *purushakara* men can change the course of their life, so *purushakara* is indispensable in one's life for achieving success

The fourth chapter contains the parables Swami Abhedananda has included in the *Sayings of Ramakrishna* the parables which were given by Sri Ramakrishna in course of his different conversations The parables of the alligator and the hunters, the Avadhutas and the angler, the Avadhuta and the

bridal procession, the barber and seven jars of gold, the Brahmin and the low-cast servant, etc., have been noted. Total fifty-one parables have been mentioned in this book. The parables are the genuine examples of the spiritual teachings and practices. In the end of each parable, there are some spiritual teachings which when followed bring blessings to the human life. As for example, a father was once passing by a field having his two sons with him. One he had taken up in his arms and the other was walking along with him holding his father's hand. They saw a kite flying and this boy, having let go his hold on his father's hand, began to clap with joy, crying, 'see papa, there is a kite'. But as he had let go the hold of his father's hand, he stumbled and got hurt. But the boy that was carried by the father also clapped his hands with joy, but did not fall as he was held by his father. The former represents self-help in spiritual life, while the latter indicates self-surrender.

## CHAPTER XXVII

### VIVEKANANDA AND HIS WORK

In accordance with the resolution passed by the Vedanta Society of New York at the Memorial Services held last October (1902) in honour of the Blessed Swami Vivekananda, the second Sunday of March (8th March, 1903) was devoted to a public recognition of the great work that had been accomplished by him in America and in Europe as well as in India. It had been desired to have a number of well-known speakers to pay tribute to his memory, but as many of the Swami's closest friends had passed away since his last visit to America, still others were too distant from New York to be present. The original plan for a public memorial meeting was modified and the present lecture was delivered by Swami Abhedananda who had the rare privilege of sitting together at the blessed feet of their wonderful Master, Sri Ramakrishna, and preaching His mission in the foreign lands, in the Carnegie Lyceum, New York, before a large and sympathetic audience. This memorable and appreciative lecture was first published in a book-form in India in 1924.

This little but illuminative pen-picture of Swami Vivekananda has a merit of its own as it came out from one of his nearest and worthiest spiritual brothers. It is rather a sincere appreciation of Swami Vivekananda and his works in America and in Europe by his beloved brother Swami Abhedananda who spent nearly twenty-four years in the West in preaching the divine message of Vedanta and the loftiest teachings of his beloved Master, Bhagavan Ramakrishna Paramhansa. Before commencing his memorable lecture on Swami Vivekananda and his works, Swami Abhedananda said "The subject of this afternoon (8th March, 1903) is of one who needs neither introduction from any of his countrymen, nor commendation from any of his humble co-workers and fellow-disciples of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna, whose seventieth birthday anniversary was celebrated last Sunday by the Vedanta Society of New York and whose wonderful romantic life we have heard in this

hall (Carnegie Lyceum Hall)" Really this maiden speech was the first appreciation of homage to the Great Swami Vivekananda by his colleague in the foreign land after he (Swami) had left his mortal coil. This lecture (or the book) undoubtedly proves a deep love and regard of Swami Abhedananda to his revered beloved brother, Swami Vivekananda.

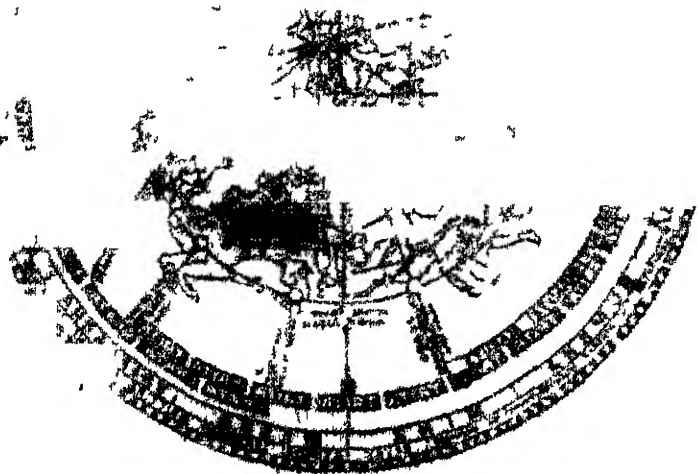
Swami Abhedananda says that Swami Vivekananda had no caste and had no earthly parents, but he was the child of Sri Ramakrishna. He renounced everything, severed his family relations and was born again of his spiritual father. It was his blessed Master who by the magic of his divine touch brought into play the latent greatness of his soul. Being the most worthy disciple of his Master, he followed the footsteps of Sri Ramakrishna, holding in his heart that he was the lowest of the low, lower even than a Pariah, so far as caste distinction and social position were concerned. Man-making was the ideal of the revered Swami. With a heart weeping at the sight of the suffering and degradation of the illiterate mass of India, with a soul glowing with the fire of disinterested love for humanity and true patriotism, Swami Vivekananda solved the problems concerning the future of his holy Motherland by holding before the nation's eyes the ideal of character-building through the light and spirit of Vedanta. "Before I close, I must tell you that I had the honour of living with this great Swami in India, in England and in this country (America). I lived and travelled with this great spiritual brother of mine, saw him day after day, and night after night, and watched his character for nearly twenty years, and I stand here (in America) to assure you that I have not found another like him in these three continents, and that no one can take the place of this wonderful personage. As a man, his character was pure and spotless, as a philosopher he was the greatest of all Eastern and Western philosophers. In him I found the ideal of Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Raja Yoga and Jnana Yoga, he was like the living example of Vedanta in all its different branches." In conclusion of this lecture, Swami Abhedananda says "Vivekananda is not dead, he is with us, now and for ever. He is the senior brother to the whole world."

The book also contains three new matters, the first of which is the miscellaneous notes taken by Swami Abhedananda from

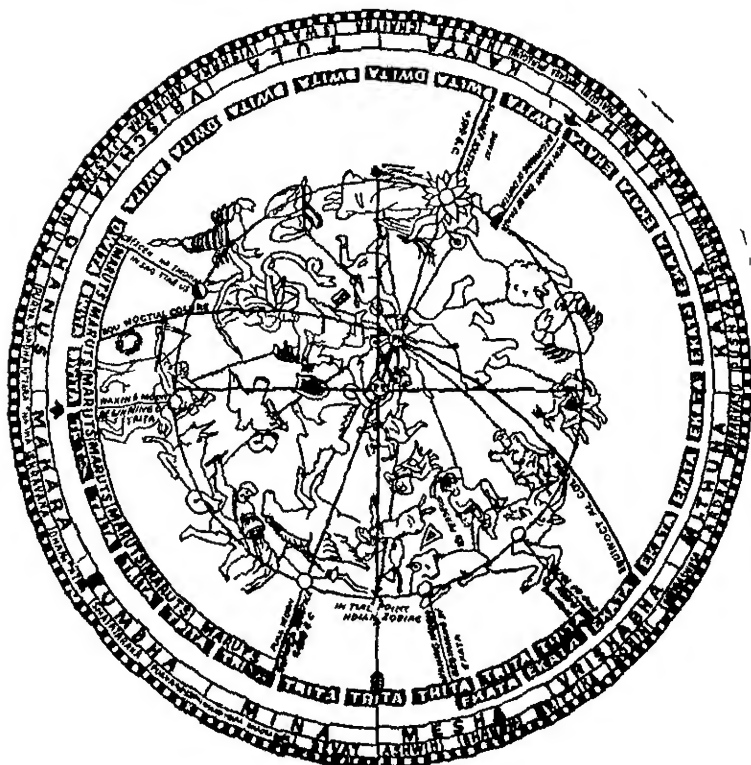


the discourses, given by Swami Vivekananda under the 'Pine' at Greenacre during July and August, 1894, the second of which is the translation from the Sanskrit of aphorisms given by Swami Vivekananda under the 'Swami's Pine' at Greenacre, July 27, 1894, and the third is the 'Song of the Sannyasins' which was incorporated by Swami Abhedananda himself in the first edition of the book

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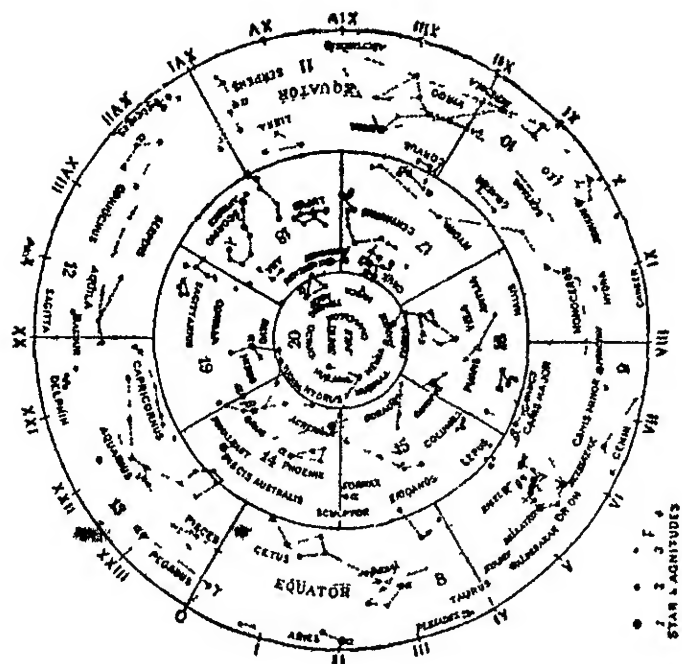


## PLATES OF HELIOCENTRIC SCIENCE

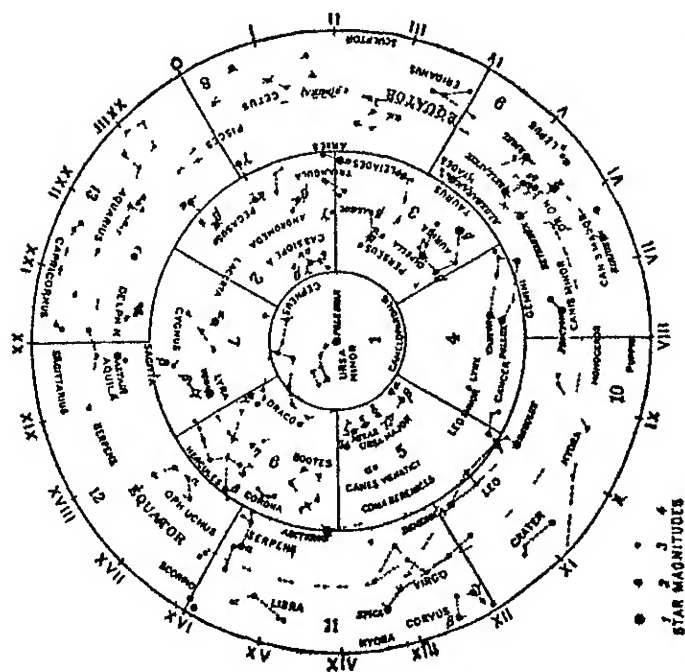


- Outer circle divided into 360 degrees
- 2nd circle The names and extent of the twenty seven Indian "Nakshatras" or divisions of the Lunar Zodiac
- 3rd circle Names and extent of the twelve Indian "Rashis" or divisions of the Solar Zodiac
- 4th circle Proposed three fold division of the Vedic Lunar Month at Season of Summer Solstice
- Section of 5th circle Proposed identification of "Maruts" with Moon's course through seven "Nakshatras" at Season of Summer Solstice
- The Constellations here appear as drawn on the celestial globe, they have not been reversed as in the other illustrations, hence an apparent, though not real, contradiction ensues

### DIVISIONS OF THE SOLAR AND LUNAR ZODIACS (CONSTELLATIONS)



CONSTELLATIONS OF THE STARS



## CHAPTER XXVIII

### A STUDY OF HELIOCENTRIC SCIENCE

Astronomy (Gr *astron*, a star, *nomos*, a law) teaches whatever is known of the heavenly bodies, may be divided into three main heads (1) *geometrical or mathematical astronomy*, (2) *physical astronomy*, and (3) *sidereal astronomy* (1) *Geometrical or mathematical astronomy* is concerned with the exact determination of the numerical and geometrical elements, magnitudes, and the figures they describe in their motions (2) *Physical astronomy* is concerned with the nature of the powers or forces that carry on the heavenly motions, the laws that they observe, and the calculation of the motions from a knowledge of these laws (2) *Sidereal astronomy* is concerned with whatever is ascertained regarding the universe of the fixed stars Besides these, another practical astronomy may be taken into consideration for various accounts of the astronomical instruments which are concerned with the astronomical requirements (vide Chambers' *Encyclopædia*, Vol I, 1877, p 506)

The Hindus, the Chinese, the Chaldeans, the Egyptians, the Greeks, the Romans, and other ancient civilized nations of the world are known to have investigated the heaven long before the Christian era Generally we come to know that the Greeks have the honour of elevating astronomy into a reliable history But, before the Greeks, the Hindus were interested in the science of astronomy and its evidence is found in the Vedic literature In ancient Greece, Thales (640 B C), the founder of the Ionic school of philosophy, laid the foundation of Greek astronomy It is said that he, for the first time, propagated the theory of the earth's sphericity, as he divided the sphere into five zones Anaxagoras also devoted his energy in the culture of this science of astronomy In 500 B C, Pythagoras propagated the science of astronomy as an able predecessor of Thales and taught that the morning and evening stars were in reality one and the same planet But physicists are of the opinion that the views of Pythagoras got no support from his successors until the advent of Copernicus The advent of the Alexandrian school is also remarkable in that period In 432 B C Meton introduced the luni-solar cycle (Metonic Cycle) "as

already intimated, and in conjunction with Euctemon, observed a solstice at Athens in the year 424 B C." The Alexandrian school determined the positions of the fixed stars by systematic arrangements of the planets and ultimately presented the trigonometrical methods and the first system of theoretical astronomy that had ever comprehended an entire plan of the celestial motions. "The most interesting circumstances connected with the early history of the Alexandrian school are the attempts made to determine the distance of the earth from the sun and the magnitude of the terrestrial globe. Aristarchus calls him—is the author of an ingenious plan to ascertain the former. Now there arose many noted astronomers like Timarchis, Aristyllus, Hipparchus of Bithynia (160-125 B C), who belonged to the Alexandrian school. Hipparchus catalogued no less than 1801 stars and his is the first reliable catalogue of Samos—the pioneer of the Copernicus system, as Hufboldt

In 130-150 A D, we come across Ptolemy, who was known as a practical astronomer and who discovered the libration or eviction of the moon. He also was the first to point out the effect of refraction. As a musician, a geographer, and a mathematician also, he was reputed and he improved many of the theories advanced by Hipparchus. In 762 A D, we notice the remarkable works in the field of astronomy "in the reign of the Caliph Al Mansur who gave great encouragement to science, as did also his successors, the 'good Haroun Al Rashid' and 'Al Mamoun'." The most illustrious of the Arabian school were Albategnius or Al Barani (880 A D), who discovered the motion of the solar apogee, and who was the first to make use of *sines* and *versed sines* instead of chords. He also corrected the Greek observations, and was altogether the most distinguished observer between Hipparchus and the Copernican era, and Ibn-Yunis (1000 A D), an excellent mathematician, who made observations of great importance in determining the disturbances and eccentricities of Jupiter and Saturn, and who was the first to use cotangents and secants.

In the northern part of Persia, an observatory was erected (in 1322 A D) by a descendant of the renowned warrior Chenghis Khan, where some tablets were constructed by Nasir-ud-din, and at Samarkand, Ulugh Beg, a grandson of Timur, made many observations and published some correct catalogues of

stars In 13th-14th centuries, we find the first translation from the *Almagest*, made under the Emperor Frederick II of Germany in about 1280 A D, and in 1252 A D, an impulse was given to science by the formation of astronomical tablets under the auspices of Alfonso X of Castile. From 1220 A D to 1476 A D, we find names of some astronomers like Holywood (Sacrobosco), Purbach, Regiomontanus (John Muller), Waltherus

Then we find many names of the astronomers in the field of astronomical science, and they are Copernicus (1475-1543), Tycho Brahe (1546-1601), Kepler (1571-1630), Galileo Galilei (1654-1642), Newton (1642-1727), Laplace (1799-808) and others. A noted astronomer remarked "If the 18th century opened with lustre derived from the physical demonstrations of Newton, it closed magnificently with the telescope discoveries of Sir William Herschel, who added to our universe, a primary planet (Uranus) with its satellites, gave two more satellites to Saturn, resolved the milky-way into countless myriads of stars, and unravelled the mystery of nebulae and of double and triple stars. Laland, Lagrange, Lacaille, and Delambre in the latter half of the 18th century did much by their researches and analyses to systematize and improve the science of astronomy. The instrumental means of observation were also, during that time, brought to high perfection. Laplace in his great work, the *Mecanique Celeste* (1799-1808), gave what further proof was needed of the truth and sufficiency of the Newtonian theory" (vide Chamber's *Encyclopædia*, 1877, pp 509). The twentieth century has produced eminent scientists like Profs Whitehead, Max Planck, Eddington, Jeans, Sullivan, Crowther and others who have given precious contributions to the domain of astronomical science, and explored many mysteries of the solar system and heavenly bodies. In recent years, Prof. Fred Hoyle and his young Indian colleague Dr J V Narlikar have created a stir among mathematicians and physicists and their new investigations and ideas will cause some re-thinking on some fundamental problems of theoretical physics. Dr Hideki Yukawa of Kyoto University, one of the Nobel Prize-winners has also explored in the recent time the particles in the nucleus or the core of the atom and this has revolutionized the orthodox and past theories when he suggests that the particles in the core of the atom are not pointlike

objects, but are billowing objects like silk handkerchief

Prof Fred Hoyle and Dr Jayant Vishnu Narlikar have contributed a new and novel theory in the field of gravitation and of other orthodox theories. It is familiar to everyone that Sir Isaac Newton discovered the theory of gravitation from the fall of an apple. Prof Einstein also threw some new lights on the theory of attraction and expulsion, i.e., of gravitation. Profs. Hoyle and Narlikar have shown that gravitation in the Einsteinian formulation is not dependent on matter, but in the Hoyle-Narlikar view, gravitation is a property of the sum of all matter in the universe and would disappear in the absence of any matter. It has been reported, "Hoyle hopes that the new theory may offer a way of unifying gravitational and electromagnetic forces in a single system, a task which Einstein left unfinished." We are also familiar with the three dimensions of space, and in the Einsteinian view, these cannot be separated from a fourth dimension—time, and everything exists in a space-time continuum. So gravitation, according to Prof Einstein, is a property of space-time, that is why it is always there. But the Hoyle-Narlikar theory has added some new things to Einstein's theory, reviving the idea of action at a distance, as maintained by the Newtonian law in a much more sophisticated form. Profs. Hoyle and Narlikar have shown that the difficulties arising from the idea of action travelling at finite speed from one body to another can be removed, if the reactions of all the remaining particles in the universe are taken into account. In place of the concept of interaction between two particles, we are now presented with the idea of interaction of a particle with the universe. Now it is known from the facts that Einstein's gravitation affects the geometry of space-time whereas Hoyle-Narlikar's gravitation becomes a property of the universe. To make the difference between the two views it can be further quoted from the article of Dr. Narlikar which was written for *New Scientist*, London, that "according to the Newtonian and Einsteinian theories, addition of new matter to the universe or removal of some of the existing matter will not, for example, make any difference to the earth's gravity ( $G$ ). But according to the Hoyle-Narlikar theory, the value of ' $G$ ' will go up by a factor of two if half of the matter in the universe is suddenly removed. And since gravitation arises from interaction between

all matter in the universe, there cannot be any gravitation when there is nothing for an object to interact with, as Dr Narlikar says that there would be no 'physics if the number of particles in the universe were less than two (cf *The Statesman*, Sunday, June 21, 1964)

Again, from the recent records of different investigations in the fields of physics and mathematics, we come to know that today the nuclear physicians have advanced one stage further into the science fiction realm of anti-matter and have substantiated, both theoretically and experimentally, that anti-matter does exist in nature. The properties of anti-matter are opposite of the familiar matter of which we and our world are made of. Today physicians and specially the Russian scientists are opening the door to the mysterious realm of micro physics where nature is still hiding many secrets. A few years ago the very idea of observing an electron seemed fantastic. In the study of anti-matter and fundamental nuclear exploration, a good many results have been obtained. The scientists at Novosibirsk Institute of Nuclear Physics have discovered many things of science or physics. The ring-currents of electrons and positrons are visible today to the naked eye, and it has also been shown that the simplest complex atomic nucleus in nature belongs to a heavy form of hydrogen called deuterium. 'The nucleus of this atom is made up of one proton and one neutron held together by the strong nuclear force. This force is basic to the world and the whole universe, it holds the practices inside all atoms together. Without it atoms could not exist (vide *The A B Patrika*, May 8, 1967)

The study of calendars are also very important in astronomy. The study of calendars marked by zodiacal constellations, says Hon Emmeline M Plunket, necessitates an acquaintance with the position of those constellations as they were to be observed through the many ages during which they held the important office of presiding over the year and its changing seasons. Such acquaintanceship depends upon careful and accurate calculations of the positions of the sun, the moon, the stars, and other heavenly bodies.

In the original sense, the constellations are configurations of stars. Regarding zodiacal constellation, Sir Arthur Stanley Eddington, and Prof Charles Everett say that from the earliest



times the star-groups known as constellations, the small groups (parts of constellations) known as astisms, and also individual stars, have received names connoting some meteorological phenomena, or symbolizing religious or mythological beliefs. In astronomy, the names given to certain groupings of stars (from the Lat *Constellatus*, studded with stars *con*, with and *stella*, a star) They are of the opinion that, at one time, it was held that the constellation names and myths were of Greek origin. This view has not been disproved, and an examination of the Hellenic myths associated with the stars and star-groups in the light of the records revealed by the decipherment of Euphre-tean cuneiforms leads to the conclusion that in many, if not all cases, the Greek myth has a Euphre-tean parallel, and so renders it probable that the Greek constellation system and the cognate legends are primarily of Semitic or even pre-Semitic origin (cf *Eugele*)

Regarding the zodiac, its signs and constellation, Dr Baker's account is also illuminating. It has already been said that 'zodiac' is the band of the heavens  $16^{\circ}$  wide through which the ecliptic runs centrally. It contains the sun and moon at all times, and the bright planets as well with the occasional exception of Venus. Twelve constellations of the zodiac are placed along this band of the heavens. The names of the twelve signs or constellations of the zodiac are Aries, Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, Leo, Virgo, Libra, Scorpio, Sagittarius, Capricornus, Aquarius, and Pisces. Meanwhile, the vernal equinox has moved westward among the stars, and the whole train of signs has followed along, because the signs are counted off from the equinox. "Each sign has shifted past its constellation into the adjoining figure to the west. So when the sun arrives on March 21, at the vernal equinox or 'first of Aries', and the almanac says 'sun enters Aries, spring begins', the sun is entering the zodiacal sign Aries, But it is then in the constellation Pisces and will not enter the constellation Aries itself for another month. This westward shifting of the vernal equinox is caused by a slow motion of the earth which now claims our attention" (Vide *An Introduction to Astronomy*, 1935, p. 55)

It is a fact that from very early times the Hindus have employed luni-solar cycles made by the combination of solar

years and lunar years, so treated as to keep the beginning of the lunar year near that of the solar year. It has already been said that in India, we find that astronomical calculation was in practice even from very ancient days. Some of the Western scholars are of the opinion that India borrowed this idea of accurate calculation of astronomy mainly from ancient Greece, and further they admit that history does not tell of communication between Greece and India sufficient to account for this similarity of astronomical method till after the date of Alexander's conquest—about 300 B.C. Hon. Plunket is of the opinion that the Greeks could not at that late date have first become acquainted with the figures of the zodiac, for in Grecian literature of a much earlier age the figures of the zodiac and other constellations are alluded to as already perfectly well-known. As the Greeks could not have learnt all their astronomical lore from the Indian, so the Indians also could not have learnt theirs from the Greeks.

As regards the Indian lunar zodiac, the Indians make use at present for calendrical purposes, not only of the twelve-fold solar zodiac but also of the *nakshatras* or lunar mansions. Zodiac, used in astronomy and astrology, means a zone of the heavens within which lie the paths of the sun, the moon, and the principal planets. It is bounded by two circles equidistant from the ecliptic, about 16 degrees apart, and it is divided into 12 signs, and marked by 12 constellations. Now, the fixation of the initial point of this lunar zodiac (a point at the end of Revati and the beginning of Ashvini, 10° degrees west of the first point of our constellation Aries) was due to an astronomical reform of the Hindu calendar "probably carried out under Grecian auspices at a date not much earlier than 600 A.D. While editing Burges' translation of the Hindu *Surya-siddhanta* Prof. Whitney writes "The initial point of the fixed Hindu sphere from which longitudes are reckoned, and at which the planetary motions are held by all schools of Hindu astronomy to have commenced at the creation, is the end of the asterism Revati, or the beginning of Ashvini. Its situation is most nearly marked by that of the principal star Revati that star is by all authorities identified with *Piacum*, of which the longitude at present, as reckoned by us, from the vernal equinox, is 17°/54". Making due allowance for the

precession (of the equinoxes), we find that it coincided in position with the vernal equinox, not far from the middle of the sixth century, or about A D 570. *As such coincidence was the occasion of the point being fixed upon as the beginning of the sphere, the time of its occurrence marks approximately the era of the fixation of the sphere, and of the commencement of the history of modern Hindu astronomy*'.

Now, to make the Hindu point of Indian calendar more explicit, it can be said that the present names of the lunar months in India were derived from the *nakshatras*, which are certain conspicuous stars or groups of star lying more or less along the neighbourhood of the ecliptic. The *nakshatras* are regarded sometimes as 27 in number, sometimes 28, and are grouped in 12 sets of two or three each, beginning, according to the earlier arrangement of the list, with the pair of Krittika and Rohini, and including in the sixth place Chaitra and Svati, and ending with the triplet Revati, Ashvini, and Bharami. The almanacs show the course of the sun through them, as well as the course of the moon, and the Hindus began to use the 12 signs of the solar Zodiac. "A lunar month may be regarded as ending either with the new moon, which is called *amavasya*, or with full-moon which is called *purnamasi*, *purnima*, a month of the former kind is termed *amanta*, 'ending with the new-moon', or *shukladi*, beginning with the bright fortnight', a month of the latter kind is termed *purnima*, 'ending with the full-moon, or *krishnadi* 'beginning with the dark fortnight'.

\* \* \* The connection between the lunar and the solar months is maintained by the point that the name Chaitra is applied according to one practice to the solar Mina, in which the lunar Chaitra begins, and according to another practice to the solar Mesha, in which the lunar Chaitra ends. Like the lunar year, the lunar month begins for religious purposes with its first lunar day, and for civil purposes with its first civil day. One mean lunar year of 12 lunations measures very nearly 354 days 6 hours 48 minutes 34 seconds, and one Hindu solar year measures 365 days 6 hours 12 minutes 30 seconds, according to Arya-Bhatta, or slightly more according to the other two authorities", (vide *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 14th ed, Vol IV, pp 577-578). The era of the Hejra of the Muslim is used principally in Turkey, Persia, Arabia, Egypt, and some parts

of India. The era is dated from the first day of the month preceding the flight of Mohammed from Mecca to Medina. This day was Thursday, July 16 in the year 622 A.D. Hejra years are purely lunar, always consisting of 12 lunar months, beginning approximately with new-moon.

The Chinese lunar zodiac is divided into 23 star groups named Sion, and they have been elaborately discussed by Gustar Schlegel in his book, *Uranographic Chinoise*. But it should be noted that the Chinese and the Hindu initial points are diametrically opposite to each other on the ecliptic. Calendrically speaking, "such opposite points may be taken to mark the same season and the same month—as for instance, in the old Arcadian calendar the month names referred to the stars in conjunction with the sun \* \* \*"

Swami Abhedananda delivered five lectures before talented American audiences sometime between 1907 and 1910, explaining the method of heliocentric science in a comparative manner so as to contribute the treasure of astronomical knowledge among the civilized nations of the world. Those lectures are now offered for the first time to the reading public in book form which will prove the profound knowledge of Swami Abhedananda in astronomical science also.

This book, *A Study of Heliocentric Science*, contains five informative chapters. The first chapter deals with the study of constellations of the zodiac. Swami Abhedananda says that India was the original home of astronomy, where from the very ancient times, the Aryans used to investigate into the movements and mystery of the stars and the planets. They were very eager to know the secret of the celestial sphere which was dominated or ruled by the burning sun. The Swami says that "from the dawn of the human history the stars were arranged in groups of constellations for the purpose of more readily distinguishing them \* \*". The constellations of the solar zodiac with figures representing twelve signs have been in use in all historical periods of all ancient nations, having nearly the same characteristics among the Greeks, the Egyptians, the Persians, the Hindus, and the Chinese. From this fact it would be

reasonable to suppose that the idea of the celestial sphere and of the solar zodiac was a common possession of all the migrating nomadic tribes of Asia" The names and the signs of the constellation of the solar zodiac like the ram, the bull, the goat, the scorpion, etc., evolved in pre-historic India, and they bear some significances Swami Abhedananda shows in a comparative manner how the bull, the fish, and other animals were sacred among the ancient civilized nations of the world, and how their forms were adopted in the method of the Indian astronomy so as to represent the signs or symbols of the constellations of the Hindus, the Persians, the Egyptians, the Chinese, and others According to the laws of the ancient astronomy, the solar zodiac is recognized as the imaginary route through the medium of which the sun travels around the earth during the period of one year

The Greek and Roman mythologies have described many stories in connection with different constellations or the signs or symbols of the zodiac The Hindu astronomers of ancient India divided the ecliptic or the solar zodiac into twenty-eight parts so as to correspond with the twenty-eight lunar mansions, and although the solar zodiac was retained by one class of astronomers, yet the lunar mansions were preferred by another class The lunar astronomers were called the *nakshatras* or stars Afterwards they were adopted by other nations like the Chinese, the Egyptians, and the Arabs Swami Abhedananda has mentioned the names of the twenty-eight stars as used in the Indian astronomy He says that Hindu astronomers knew about the five main planets and also the ascending, the descending notes on the ecliptic "In this age of scepticism and agnosticism we may laugh at the claims of the science of true astronomy, but it is certainly a study of the power fascination which it has extended over the greatest men through 7000 or 8000 years, and a vast number of well-authenticated fulfilment of prophecies by the astrologers which have been handed down through generations will prove that there is some underlying truth at the bottom of its claims"

The second chapter deals with the sun and the solar forces. Swami Abhedananda says that the word 'astronomy' is composed of the words *astron* and *nomos*, which mean 'the star' and 'the law' Therefore, the word 'astronomy' connotes the

idea of 'the law of the stars' In fact, astronomy is a science which teaches the position, motion, action, or influence of the sun, the moon, stars, and other planets It is very oldest science which has been handed down to us from time immemorial In the Vedic period, the Hindus used to consider astronomy as an indispensable science There was a Newton in India and his name was Arya-Bhatta He discovered the law of gravitation (*madhyakarshana*) which is attraction towards the centre Heliocentric science says that the sun is the centre of the solar system and the earth and other planets move around the sun and the earth rotates around its axis once in twenty-four hours

After Arya-Bhatta, came Ptolemy He was a Greek and wrote a book, the *Almagest*, in which he described the details of the solar system describing the motions and the positions of different planets including the sun, the moon, the earth, etc In the 6th century A.D., Copernicus appeared in the field of astronomy or astronomical science and revived the old theory of Pythagoras who declared some hundreds of years ago that the sun is the centre of the solar system and the earth and other planets are rotating around the sun annually After Copernicus appeared Galileo, Kepler, Newton, and others, and all of them contributed their share to the growth of the wonderful science of astronomy Galileo was the first who invented the telescope Again Galileo was also the first to discover that Venus has her phases like the phase of the moon Copernicus prophesied it but he had no telescope Galileo proved afterwards the truth of the Copernician theory by the help of his telescope

In connection with astronomical science and its contribution, Swami Abhedananda says that astronomy has rendered a great service to the field of investigation of the heavenly bodies, but it should be remembered that man's intellect and intuition are the best instruments for such investigation and new discoveries So everything of astronomical science and enquiry depends upon man's intellect and intellectual investigations Sometimes it is believed that a man is an instrument in the hand of the influence of the planets or the heavenly bodies and his destiny entirely depends upon the mercy of the planetary influence But that is not correct, because men of intellect and

intuition of different nations of different ages have laid their heads to discover the laws of nature and of the heavenly bodies and have thus enriched the domain of astronomical science of the world. They can, therefore, design their destiny by dint of their thoughts and deeds.

Swami Abhedananda has also dealt with the theories of heat and light which are constantly radiating from the sun through space. He has described the diameter, size, and weight of the sun and other planets and has said about the solar spots in the vast surface of the sun, which were noticed as early as 807 A.D. Regarding the sun's weight, age, and radiation of heat or energy, we can mention here the approximate calculations as given by Prof. H. H. Jeans in his book, *The Universe Around Us* (1933). Prof. Jean writes: "Thus the sun must have weighed 360,000 million tons more than now at this time tomorrow. And 360,000 million tons a day is 131 million million tons a year." \* \* "If the sun continued to radiate at precisely its present rate until it had turned absolutely the whole of its present mass into radiation, a simple sum in division shows that it would last for just about 15 million million years, by which time its last ounce of weight would be disappearing." \* \* "A series of investigations, which culminated in a paper published by Eddington in 1924, disclosed that, in a general sort of way, a star's luminosity depends mainly on its weight." However, newer thoughts in this regard are arising with the progress of science.

Regarding the sun's distance from the earth and its other particulars, Prof. Jeans further says that the sun's distance is a little less than 93 million miles—probably about 92,990,000 miles. Again the sun is about 400 times as distant as the moon. The sun's diameter is about 400 times the moon's diameter, or 109 times as big in each direction as the earth—in length and in breadth and height, and Prof. Jeans is of opinion that no fewer than 1,300,000 earths could be packed inside the sun. And approximately it can be said that the sun is not only losing weight at the rate of 4 million tons a second, but is also shrinking in size and brilliancy (vide Chapter III, pp. 168-204).

Swami Abhedananda has even given some approximate informations about heat and light which are radiated from

the burning sun But while describing the immensity of power and volume of energy of the sun and the stars, the Swami also compares these with the immensity and power of the human mind which can be said to be greater than the solar system Regarding the power of the human mind, the Swami says "The mind is greater than the solar system \* \* It can reach the pole star in an instant and scrutinize every minute detail, even measure its weight, its length and breadth' The immensity or vastness of the sun has been measured by scientists, and they say that the sun is a gigantic magnet and forms the centre of the solar system Moreover, the magnetic currents start out from the centre of the sun and polarize on our and on different planets Sir William Herschel advanced the theory that the whole humankind is more or less affected by these magnetic currents The magnetic currents are the source of life or life-force, and all living beings draw their energy from these currents

Swami Abhedananda says that astronomers are of different opinions regarding the colour of the sun It is an interesting thing to know that the sun's body in itself is not hot, but its surrounding atmosphere is at a high temperature The Swami adds "The heat of the sun is caused by condensation, whereby the size of the sun is constantly decreasing, and its potential energy is converted into kinetic one The heat is coming out and the sun is shrinking" Therefore, in course of time the sun will cease to shine, as our earth has ceased to shine The Swami has further said that many dead suns (the suns without heat and light) are still revolving in the vast heavenly space In fact, solar forces and magnetic currents are constantly radiating from the sun, and that radiation is causing all changes in the sun

The Swami then describes the purity and solemnity of the conception of the sun In the Vedic age, he says, we find that the Aryans used to pray to the sun for their vegetation, nourishment and welfare of the communities They regarded the sun as the supreme God and also as the eternal source of material and spiritual prosperity The Swami is of the opinion that this reverential attitude of the Aryans in the remote days evolved from the vastness and infinite power of the sun and from their knowledge that for the heat and the light of the sun all the animate and inanimate objects of the universe main-



tain their life and existence

Swami Abhedananda says that by studying science of astronomy we can diagnose all diseases and, therefore, can cure them, and not only can we thus know the causes of diseases, but also can know purpose and end of our earthly life. It is an inevitable law that the souls after passing away from this phenomenal world come back again to the world for enjoying the fruits of their works, done in the past life. The Hindu sages say that this is possible for the law of *karma*. Here it should be remembered that there is not only a cause on the spiritual side in the law of *karma*, but also a physical law that is to be discovered by this science of astronomy and there would be a perfect harmony between the physical plane and the mental-spiritual plane and that is what we need today. If the whole universe is one and if God is the centre of the universe like the soul, then we are just like the small cells in the body of that universal Being and that body is the phenomenal universe. The Swami says "So we are all related to each other, and that will lead us to the belief that the universe is one stupendous whole and we are but parts, and, in reality, we live and move and have our beings in God"

The third chapter deals with the planets and the planetary influences. The Swami has stated that solar magnetic science is the most wonderful science. The planets really make up the whole structure of the solar system. There are eight main planets, including hundreds of planetoids or smaller planets. There are also innumerable burning stars of different sizes in the heavens. Sir James Jeans says that, as it is impossible to count the numberless sands on the shore of an ocean, so it is not possible to count the stars that are scattered in the vast sky. And we know that luminous band of countless stars (star-cloud) encircling the heavens have built the grand structure of the Milky Way. The main eight planets are again divided into two groups: one is called the *inferior group* with Mercury, Venus, etc., whose orbits are within the orbit of the earth, and the other is called the *superior group*, whose orbits are beyond the orbit of the earth, and these superior planets are Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune. Between the Mercury and the sun there exist innumerable planets which are really unknown to us. The Mercury is the youngest planet

and the Neptune the oldest one of the solar system Swami Abhedananda has mentioned their motion and velocity and has given detailed descriptions of each planet He says "Each of these planets being a magnet, the magnetic currents start from them and go in the space all around, just as the sun sends forth its rays in all directions The magnetic currents are also emitting and going from the sun in all directions and sustaining the vitality of all the living beings of the universe" Each of the planets has its own velocity and motion around the sun and is distributing the magnetic currents in the ocean of ether This ocean of ether is vast and all the planets and comets and other luminous heavenly bodies are rotating around their own axis Each planet has a repellant force which make it go off in a straight line The sun is pulling towards it and the planet is trying to get off and the resultant is the planet's revolution around the sun

Now, from the study of the solar magnetic science we come to know that the zodiac is a scale or measure which has been regarded as the foundation for working out of different effects and changes, produced by the polarity and position of the planets in relation to the sun, the central planet The sun may be compared with the soul which forms the centre of the physical system The sun has also an influence on the human and the animal souls and so it is regarded by the scientists as the soul of the solar system Astronomical science says that the sun and other planets exert their influence upon our body, nervous system, and mind Some are of the opinion that it is an inevitable law of nature that the planets have their influences upon body and mind of the human beings and the animals and no man can escape from that planetary influence The Swami says that it is true that the planets have certain powers and can exert those powers upon body and mind of all beings, but it is also a fact that through correct knowledge of the law of nature that regulates the powers or influences of the planets, men can control those planetary influences Really our souls are more powerful than the planets and even than the sun and if the souls are conscious of their infinite powers, they can govern all the laws of nature

The fourth chapter deals with the earth and its relation to the sun Swami Abhedananda says that before the time of

Copernicus, astronomy was based upon the Ptolemaic system which enunciated that each planet revolves in circle around the earth which is fixed. But Copernicus broke away from this system in the beginning of the sixteen century. It has been said that he revived the Pythagorean theory which proved that the sun is the centre around which all the planets including the earth are revolving. Copernicus brought a new change in the domain of astronomy. After Copernicus Tycho Brahe, the Danish astronomer and his disciple, Kepler discovered the truth that the planets revolve in circular motion around the sun. In 1609, Kepler firmly declared that the planets revolve in ellipses with the sun at one focus, and there is a difference between the centre of a circle and the focus of this ellipse. Kepler also discovered that the velocity of a planet varies at different parts of its orbit.

After Kepler, Newton appeared and discovered the law of gravitation by observing the falling of an apple and this law cleared away all those former theories which were forwarded by the followers of the Ptolemaic system. But still there rang a question as to how the earth is related to the sun and what is the birthright of the earth. And it has already been explained before how Prof. Einstein remodelled the theory of Newton to some extent and afterwards this gravitation theory got a new and novel interpretation in the hands of Profs. F. Hoyle and I. V. Narlikar. However, Swami Abhedananda says that Kepler's hypothesis was considered as most satisfactory in view of this question. But this hypothesis was first started by the German philosopher, Immanuel Kant and was further reinforced by Laplace, the great French astronomer and mathematician. Both Kant and Laplace tried to explain the formation of the solar system which we have and this is known as the nebular hypothesis. This hypothesis explained that at one time our solar system was a gyrating mass of nebulous matter which was a gaseous substance. Swami Abhedananda says that this gaseous substance or 'this gas was all in a state of agitation, and it was all moving in a spiral form, having one centre like a nucleus, then going around in a spiral form, all revolving in that direction and making a central nucleus here, and gradually throwing little pieces or masses of the gaseous substance away from the centre, and this was the nebulous

mass and that was the foundation of our solar system”

Now, what are the nebulous masses or nebulae which are the source or matrix of hundreds and thousands of planets and also of the gigantic solar system. The nebulae are the cloudy or foggy patches, or a cluster of burning stars. Swami Abhedananda has already stated in course of his discussion that Immanuel Kant had already suggested that there are immensely distant planets and also sister-galaxies, which are in fact the objects termed ‘nebulae’ which appear as pale, elliptical, or hazy patches of light. This suggestion of Kant was energetically discussed by different astronomers and at last in 1791, and was confirmed by William Herschel, as he himself discovered such thousands of new nebulae which were known as thick clusters of cloudy patches or stars or ‘the shining fluid’. In 1850, the German astronomer, Humboldt also accepted the discovery of Herschel and named them ‘island universes’. In 1664, Huygens discovered by means of spectroscopic analysis many of the planetary and diffuse nebulae (such as that in Orion), which were not composed of stars, but were of highly rarified gas “whose spectrum consists of isolated bright lines”. Huygens found those diffuse nebulae as foggy patches which are recognized today as other galaxies far beyond our own and also as extragalactic nebulae, while the clouds of gas and dust in our own galaxy are the galactic nebulae. The nebulae are of different sizes and of different colours. Some of them are of the same general type as that of the sun. The planetary nebulae are on the average about ten million million miles in diameter and their central stars have surface temperature of 50,000°K, though their absolute brightness is considerably less than that of stars of this class outside the planetaries. Generally stars and nebulae constitute the basic material of the star cloud around us and the star-clouds form the framework of the vast Milky Way which was called by Galileo as “a mass of innumerable stars planted in clusters”. When Swami Abhedananda was in America (in 1898 to 1921 A.D.), he observed the sun, the moon and hundreds of thousands of stars, nebulae, and other bright blazing planets through the Mount Wilson 100 in reflector giving a view of a portion of the sky something like 10 light years in diameter (10 miles, or 10,000 times the diameter of the galaxy, and the volume of space that can be

explored by the Mount Palomar 200-inch reflector has a radius of about 19 light years) The Swami reported that within this region of space, explored by the Mount Wilson 100-inch reflector, about a million nebulae brighter than those of the 18th magnitude can be photographed

The extragalactic nebulae appear as faint, diffuse or light, spiral, circular or elliptical in shape, brighter at the centre than towards the edges, but showing no trace of internal structure Covering several hundreds of the brightest nebulae and some thousands of the fainter ones, astronomer Hubble classified the extragalactic nebulae into three main categories (1) *globular and elliptical nebulae*, (2) *spiral nebulae*, and (3) *irregular nebulae* The *spiral nebulae* were divided again into two *normal spirals* and *barred spirals* The *irregular nebulae* are less in number and about half of them are objects like the 'Magellanic Clouds' which are characterised by the absence of a nucleus and a general lack of symmetry Now, distances and dimensions of the extragalactic nebulae were investigated by Prof. Capherl between 1922 and 1924 and found to be about 70,000 to 80,000 light years Profs. Lucian Rudaux and G. E. Vancoubers are of the opinion that knowledge of the distances of the extragalactic nebulae allures their linear dimensions to be directly calculated from their angular dimensions In this way, Hubble has further shown 'that the mean diameters of the bright central regions of the nebulae (which coincide more or less with their photographic images) are of the order of 2,000 light years for globular nebulae, 4,000—5,000 light years for late elliptical nebulae and 6,000—9,000 in the case of irregular nebulae and spirals' (vide *Laronssee Encyclopedia of Astronomy*, 1959, Chapter 17, pp. 395-415 and Robert H. Baker *An Introduction to Astronomy*, 1935, pp. 264-271) Celebrated scientists like Profs. Jeans, Eddington, Max Planck, Whitehead, Crowther, Sullivan, and others have also discussed the particulars of the planets and the nebulae

Regarding equinox, Swami Abhedananda says that Hipparchus who lived in the second century B.C., discovered for the first time in Europe the precession of equinox Now, what do we understand by equinox? Equinox is the plane of the equator which is extended to the celestial sphere and the orbit of the earth strikes in two points of that celestial equinox and

that becomes the *vernal equinox* and the *autumnal equinox*, when the sun is overhead at the equinox. The Swami has mentioned here the astronomers' calculation of both the *vernal* and the *autumnal equinoxes*, which first happened in 3058 B C (*autumnal equinox*) and in 6405 B V (*vernal equinox*). The discussions about the dates and positions of the equinoxes in connection with the winter and summer solstice are very interesting and historical too. Swami Abhedananda has discussed briefly about them in his lecture on *Christ and Christmas*.

Swami Abhedananda says that the size of the earth has been measured and it has been seen that the earth's circumference is nearly 25,000 miles and its diameter is nearly 8000 miles. Dr Robert H Baker says that measurement of the size of the earth seem to have begun as long ago as the fourth century B C. The best-known and perhaps the most accurate of the early attempts was made in the third century B.C. by Eratosthenes, the celebrated geographer and librarian of the great museum in Alexandria. He observed that the sun stood a fiftieth of the circumference of the heavens away from the point overhead at noon on the longest day of the year. At Syene (near Assuan) in Upper Egypt, some five hundred miles south of Alexandria, the sun was said to be directly overhead at noon on that day. The earth's circumference, therefore, came out to be about 25,000 miles (cf Dr Baker *An Introduction to Astronomy*, 1935, pp 4-5).

The sun's distance from the earth averages a little less than 92,900,000 miles. But its distance varies and it varies from 91,300,000 miles in January to 94,000,000 miles in July. The earth's orbit is in ellipse. Now, according to the *law of equal areas*, speed of the revolving earth around the sun varies. The earth revolves faster in winter and slower in summer. Dr Baker has given an account that the flight of the earth around the sun is 18½ miles a second or about 66,000 miles an hour. The speed increases a little more than a quarter of a mile a second at the most in winter and reduces by the same amount in summer. The whole variation is rather small, because the earth's orbit is so nearly circular.

The sun moves north and south during the year as well and withdraws as much as 23½° from the equator in each

direction before it returns. Swami Abhedananda has discussed this movement of the earth as well as the ecliptic. The ecliptic is the sun's apparent annual path around the heavens. Dr Baker says that the ecliptic is a great circle inclined  $23\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  to the celestial equator. This circle of the celestial sphere must not be confused with the earth's orbit, the slightly elliptical course 180 million miles across, in which the earth revolves around the sun. Dr Baker says "The ecliptic and the earth's orbit lie in the same plane, one 'over' the other, like the celestial equator and the earth's equator. The  $23\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  inclination of the celestial equator to the ecliptic shows that the earth's equator is inclined  $23\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  to its orbit around the sun." Swami Abhedananda has also forwarded its account in a similar way.

The Swami's accounts of equinoxes and solstices are also informative. The equinoxes are the two points where the ecliptic crosses the celestial equator. The solstices are also the two points on the ecliptic where the sun is farthest north or south from the celestial equator. Two equinoxes are the *vernal equinox* and the *autumnal equinox* and two solstices are the *summer solstice* and *winter solstice*. Dr Baker says that the *vernal equinox* is the point where the sun crosses the celestial equator in its way north. This occurs on March 21, when spring begins. The *summer solstice* is the northernmost point of the ecliptic  $23\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  north of the celestial equator. The sun comes here on June 22, when summer begins. The *autumnal equinox* is the point where the sun crosses the celestial equator on its way south. This occurs on September 23, when autumn begins. The *winter solstice* is the southernmost point of the ecliptic,  $23\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  south from the celestial equator. Here the sun comes on December 22, when winter begins. These dates vary a little from year to year owing to the plan of leap years.

After discussing about the earth, Swami Abhedananda has given some accounts of the moon. Of all the satellites, says Dr Baker, our moon has the distinction of being the most nearly comparable with its primary in size and mass. The moon is 2160 miles in diameter, or more than a quarter of the earth's diameter, while its mass is one eighty-second part of the earth's mass. The Swami's account is similar to that of Dr Baker. Two apparent motions of the moon are: it circles westward around us and moves steadily eastward against the turning background.

of the stars Moon's orbit is an ellipse having the earth at one focus At *perigee*, where the moon is nearest the earth, its distance from the earth is 221,463 miles and at *apogee*, where it is the most remote, the distance increases to 252,710 miles The moon's equator is tilted about  $6\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  to the plane of its orbit The moon's revolution is not uniform There are only a few irregularities of the moon's surface that reminds us of some mountain ranges There are also some lunar craters which exceed 30,000 in number There are many *rills* as well They are irregular clefts as much as half a mile wide and of unknown depths It has no atmosphere or air around, or at least no atmosphere comparable with our own Eclipses can occur at the two opposite seasons when the sun is passing by a node of the moon's path Now the recent Sputnik investigations have thrown sufficient light of new informations which, we believe, will revolutionize many old theories and beliefs of the past and we may imagine that in this new atomic age, the Russian and the American scientific attempts in the space will make possible for the men of this earth to descend on the surface of the moon in near future

Swami Abhedananda says that everything in this universe is moving in a cycle and everything is shifting or changing and nothing is stationary But in the midst of the changes there is something which does not change and that unchanging substance is the Soul or the *Atman* The earth is just like a child of the gigantic sun All the particles of matter and all the forces and magnetic currents which they possess, have come out from the sun The sun is, therefore, regarded as the source of life or vital energy

The fifth chapter deals with the mystery of heliocentric science Swami Abhedananda says that the study of astronomy used to be made by the ancients for the purpose of divination In the Vedas, astronomy has been mentioned as one of the limbs (*angas*) of the holy scriptures The Magi priests of ancient Persia had their temples on the top of the hills for accurately observing the movements of the heavenly bodies The old remains of the *Yantra-Mantras* at different places of India prove that in ancient and mediæval times the study of science of astronomy was in practice among the Indian scientists Tiberius, the Emperor of Rome, encouragtd the culture of astronomy



and astrology among the people of his country. It is said that Hippocrates borrowed his *Materia Medica* from India. The Hindu astronomers brought the influence of the stars in minute details in all the affairs of life. The Arabs and the Mooniah astronomers popularised the study of this phase of astronomy in Western Europe. The Arabs learned a great deal of science and art of astronomy from India (vide Swami Abhedananda *India and Her People*). Europe is also indebted to India for her culture of astronomical science and trigonometry. History tells us that in Europe in the middle ages, the people used to draw up a horoscope, placing the sun, the moon, and the stars in different signs of the zodiac. The Greek and the Roman mythologies have described many stories in connection with different constellations or signs of the zodiac.

Swami Abhedananda says that ancient astronomy was founded upon the geocentric system of Ptolemy which held that the earth was the centre, around which the sun with all other planets, including their moons, revolved in twenty-four hours. The earth was placed in this ancient system at a position where the sun is at present and the sun was placed in one corner. But the Copernician system explained the opposite way. It states that the sun is the centre, while all other planets are revolving around the sun. Now, apart from this geocentric system, there is the heliocentric system which is based not upon the real motion of the earth and other planets around the sun. The position of a planet, when seen from the centre of the sun, is called the heliocentric place, while the geocentric place of a planet is that at which as it is seen from the centre of the earth.

While explaining further the meaning of both heliocentric and geocentric science, Swami Abhedananda says "So heliocentric science means that an observer stands at the centre of the sun and looks at the position of the planets as the actual position is, but geocentric science means that both these planets are moving in the same direction around the sun, and when you look at any of these planets from the earth, if you look towards the sun, the sun would appear to you as in this direction \* \* That is, the heliocentric position is the real position, and the geocentric one is the apparent, just as the apparent motion of the sun is from the east to the west, but, in reality,

the sun is not rising in the east and setting in the west, but the earth itself is moving from the west towards the east and facing the sun. That is the real motion, while the apparent motion is just the opposite." In fact, heliocentric science is based upon the perfect harmony between the earth and the celestial bodies, whereas the geocentric one is apparent.

Swami Abhedananda has further raised some questions about the inferior planets, Venus and Mercury and the superior planets, Mars and Jupiter, because he says that when the inferior planet Venus exists between the earth and the sun, then an observer at the centre of the sun would see it at the opposite part of the zodiac from that which it appears to us from the earth and that causes a great deal of the retrograde motion. Now the retrograde motions have been explained by the astronomers in course of study of the system of the planets. So before going into the problem of the retrograde motions of the planets, let us have some idea about the planets, together with their names and classification and with their systems of revolutions and configurations.

Originally planets were supposed to be only seven in the heavens and they were the sun, the moon, and the five bright planets. By 'planet' we mean a heavenly body which revolves round the sun. The planet Uranus was discovered in 1781 and Neptune was found in 1846. The discovery of Pluto was announced in 1930 and that of Ceres in 1801. The earth is one of the nine principal planets which revolves round the sun. The moon is one of the twenty-six satellites. Besides, there are hundreds and thousands of comets and meteors. These planets, satellites, comets, and meteors, together with the sun as their centre and source, form the celestial family or the solar system.

The planets are divided into two main classes, inferior and superior. Besides these two classes the planets are again known as the inner ones, the minor ones, and the outer ones. The inferior planets are nearer to the sun than we are, while the superior ones revolve outside the earth's orbit. The astronomers have called the four inner planets (including the earth) as the terrestrial planets and the five outer planets revolve outside the main zone of the asteroids. Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune were often known as the major planets, and afterwards, the tiny Pluto was added to this group.

All the planets revolve from the west to the east. The majority of the satellites revolve in this way. The orbits of the planets and the satellites are nearly like circles. Astronomers maintain that they are the ellipses of small eccentricity. Mercury and Pluto have considerably flattened orbits. Further, it is noticed that the orbits of the majority of the planets and the satellites lie nearly in the same plane. Now the inferior planets like Mercury and Venus oscillate to the east and the west of the sun's place. The superior planets like Mars and Jupiter move continually westward relative to the sun's place (cf Dr Baker *An Introduction to Astronomy*, pp 158-159). Now, owing to the earth's swift movement in its orbit around the sun, the planets are shifted backward against the more distant background of the stars. And it has been seen that a superior planet, Mars, retrogrades about the time of its opposition, for the earth then overtakes the planet and leaves it behind. Similarly, an inferior planet like Venus retrogrades near conjunction. So, generally, it is found that a planet retrogrades or apparently moves westward among the stars when it is nearest the planet earth. Swami Abhedananda says that we ought to have knowledge and charts and signs (though he has already discussed them in the earliest part of the book), which will give us an idea how the different retrograde motions that are to be calculated in the geocentric system, happen. The Swami has also explained the system of the retrograde motions of the planets which are shifted backward against the more distant background of the stars, owing to the earth's swift movements in its orbit around the sun.

The Swami has further discussed the signs of the zodiac and has shown their influence upon the mind of the living beings of the universe. As for example, the whole zodiac is divided into four quarters. The first quarter, from Aries to Cancer is called the 'quarter of love'. The second quarter, from Cancer to Libra, is the 'quarter of wisdom'. Similarly, there are the 'quarter of wealth' and the 'quarter of labour'. Now it is found that the four quarters of the zodiac are named after love, wisdom, wealth, and labour. Swami Abhedananda says that the zodiac has, therefore, an intimate relation with the minds of the human beings, and its psychology or science say that there lies a perfect harmony between the universal cosmic mind

and the individual mind (And so the Indian Yoga Psychology says that as the individual minds are parts and parcels of the universal cosmic mind and as the universal cosmic mind is known as *Ishvara* or the Divine *Prakriti* which is all-pervading, so an individual mind can communicate with other individual minds and can transfer its thought and power to other minds) Swami Abhedananda has elaborately discussed this secret in the fifth chapter of the book. He has stated that there is an universal man and his solar plexus is at Libra, his heart is at Leo, his lungs are at Gemini, and his neck is at Taurus, and he is standing on Pisces, and this universal man, or the *Virata Purushra*, can be compared to a sychometer. This *Virata Purusha* or the 'planetary man' is related with the solar system and has some particular sensitive vibrations which attract and affect our earth and its beings on account of their relative position. Regarding the signs of the planets it can be said that, according to astronomy, a man born in Aries is intellectual and active in mental pursuits. Besides, Aries is the fire-sign, Taurus is the earth sign, Gemini is the air sign, and Cancer is the water sign, and from this it is concluded that the elements like fire, water, air, earth are the representations of the planets. Again, in the zodiac, there are three crosses, male, female, and vital or male, vital and neutral, and they have influence over the minds and the physical bodies of the living beings. The Swami says that solar magnetic (heliocentric) science therefore teaches us that "zodiac, based upon the law of matter and upon the positive head of our solar system, is known as the gigantic magnet \* \* Its magnetic currents are the strongest, when it is nearest the sun, at its perihelion. When the planet is nearest the sun, it is called *perihelion* and when it is farthest away, it is called *aphelion*'

In conclusion, Swami Abhedananda says that the souls of all living beings are greater and mightier than the solar system. "The soul is a part of the omnipotent Divine Being, and it has absolute power to change all these conditions, no matter how the planets are against you. If you can send out your vibrations, i.e., the soul vibrations which are no other than the spiritual forces, then that will overcome all these planetary influences. The planetary influences are phenomenal and are subject to changes, whereas the spiritual influences are divine

and changeless, and, therefore, the spiritual influences are the means for removing obstructions, created by planetary and other influences" In fact, a man is a creator of his own destiny, he can do or undo everything by his will-power, and so the influences of the planets or of any other things cannot do any harm to him who cultivates spiritual power or struggles hard for his spiritual enlightenmen

## CHAPTER XXIX

### RELIGION OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

*Religion of the Twentieth Century* is a thesis on scientific approach towards religion and at the same time towards philosophy. Swami Abhedananda says that twentieth century is called the age of science and reason, and, therefore, all studies and investigations should be made with a new scientific outlook. Everyday science is forcing us to remodel our own old ideas, to change our old habits, to rebuild our dwelling houses and to reform our societies, so the twentieth century needs religion which will not support any doctrine or dogma which cannot be sustained by scientific reasoning and, therefore, there must be wedding of science with religion and philosophy, and science must accompany both religion and philosophy to get comprehensive knowledge or experience. Prof. C. E. M. Joad has pleaded for this wedding of modern science with philosophy and religion for getting wider knowledge of everything of the world as well as of the World-Essence. In the Introduction of his book, *Philosophical Aspect of Modern Science*, he has stated "It is often said that current developments in physical science have no bearing upon philosophical problems, and that the metaphysician may ignore them as lying outside his province \* \* For it is the business of philosophy to correlate the evidence collected by the special sciences, and to try to fit it into a coherent scheme of the universe as a whole. Not only the special sciences which afford data for the philosopher, for the vision of the artist, the religious consciousness of the saint and the day-to-day experience of the plain man are equally facts of which philosophy must take cognizance"

Prof. A. N. Whitehead has also discussed this point of agreement between science and philosophy and also between science and religion in the chapters IX and XII of his book, *Science and the Modern World*. He has said that the history of philosophy runs curiously parallel to that of science. "In the case of both, the seventeenth century set the stage for its two successors. But, with the twentieth century a new act commences

It is an exaggeration to attribute a general change in the climate of thought to any one piece of writing, to any one author \* \* The scientific materialism and the Cartesian Age were both challenged at the same moment, one by science and the other by philosophy, as represented by William James with his *psychological antecedents*, " Really there happened a conflict between the interpretation or presentation of the objective world of science and that of the subjective world of philosophy, but that conflict was merely a superficial one, as the terms, subject and object, or the subjective and the objective, being relational, are not constant and absolute real

Similar verdict can be given in the case of seeming conflict between science and religion In fact, change in outlook as well as modification in the expression or interpretation of the principles and truths of both science and religion are essential for avoiding the conflict between them As for example, says Prof Whitehead, 'Religion will not regain its old power until it can face change in the same spirit as does science Its principles *may be eternal, but the expressions of those principles* require continual development This evolution of religion is in the main a disengagement of its own proper ideas from the adventitious notions which have crept into its reason of the expression of its own ideas in terms of the imaginative picture of the world entertained in previous ages \* \* In so far, therefore, as any religion has any contact with physical facts, it is to be expected that the point of view of those facts must be continually modified as scientific knowledge advances In this way, the exact relevance of these facts for religious thought will grow more and more clear The progress of science must result in the increasing codification of religious thought, to the great advantage of religion" (cf *Science and the Modern World*, Penguin series, p 219)

Swami Abhedananda has similarly said that the twentieth century needs a religion (and a philosophy) which will harmonize with the ultimate conclusion of all great philosophers of all countries and will be based upon the moral and spiritual laws which govern our lives The real contention of the Swami's statement is that modern science is rendering a great service to the domains of religion and philosophy, and it is quite evident from the modern tendencies of both science and philosophy

that they are trying their best to co operate with each other for arriving at a wider knowledge of everything pertaining to the physical worlds and the world beyond our senses Prof Errol E Harris forwards also a similar statement while he discusses about science, philosophy and religion in the chapter X of his book, *Nature, Mind and Modern Science* He writes "Modern science has progressed beyond the empirical attitude and tends to become philosophical Meanwhile modern philosophy has more and more become allied to the sciences and our foremost philosophers are eminent scientific figures" He has further stated "Similarly, the 19th century conflict between science and religion has passed away, except for vestigial concepts both in science and religion handed down from the era of matter-minded dichotomy In the process of evolution which is nature, the crown of the completed series of forms is God, and because, as such, He is the realization of a transcendent perfection, we tend in common parlance to speak of Him as apart from, beyond and above nature—and so, in certain moods to deny His existence altogether But this \* \* is to break the undivided and indivisible chain of the series and to render nature as unintelligent and meaningless as God which the theist rejects The same tendency, owing to the divine character of the higher act of mind, leads to a denial by some of the objectivity (i.e. the reality) of values and even of the existence of thinking itself But though God transcends the process of development—as must be the case if He is its fulfilment—He is also necessarily immanent in and throughout the process—or else it could not be a process of development at all Consequently, the existence of God is the absolute and most indispensable presupposition of science, and so far from there being alienation of science from religion in the modern era, there is and can only be the closest *reproachment* between them if both scientific and religious concepts are rightly interpreted"

Swami Abhedananda is of the same opinion though he forwards it in a different way He says "The religion of the twentieth century needs a conception of God who is personal, impersonal, and beyond both, whose supreme aspect will harmonize with the absolute Reality of the universe called by different name, \* \*" But the Swami says that it is true that modern science presupposes the existence of God as the world-



cause and also it is a fact that all the philosophers in this scientific age admit the existence of God or a Divine Being, and give different names of God or the Supreme Being, but yet it should be remembered that when we give a name and personality to the Divine Being, we project our own ideas and make God or the Divine Being limited by our conceptions of His personality. Why should God be limited by our name and conception of His personality? (Here Swami Abhedananda calls God as the absolute Brahman which knows no limiting adjunct of categories and limitation of time space-causation) We must realize Him as the Infinite Being beyond all limitations of our conceptions, and of our ideas, and the Divine Being should be harmonized with the highest ideals of the greatest philosophers and scientists of the world. In that way we will find an absolute harmony between religion and science. Herbert Spencer had in his mind this grand idea of harmony, and so he (Herbert Spencer) has said that the most abstract truth contained in religion and the most abstract truth contained in science must be one in which two coalesce.

The physicists of this present age are trying to harmonize religion and philosophy with the ultimate conclusions of modern science. In the remote days, in India, we also find scientific knowledge in the field of philosophy. The great and original thinkers like Kapila, Gautama, Kanada and others worked out their philosophical systems entirely based upon methodical knowledge and scientific analysis. As for example, modern science has discovered that various forces of nature like electricity, light, heat, motion, gravitation, etc. are so many expressions or manifestations of one eternal cosmic Energy and it is interesting to note that some thousands years ago Kapila, the father of the theory of evolution, discovered that everything in this universe evolved out of the Nature or *Prakriti*, coming in contact with the ever-intelligent *Purusha*, and effect is contained in cause, as when dissolution of the world happens, effect, the world appearance, is contained in seed form in the womb of cause, the *Prakriti*, and so dissolution means effect returns to its original state of cause. Swami Abhedananda has also drawn our attention to this scientific fact or theory of the *Sankhya*, and has said that this system of the *Sankhya* philosophy has been adopted by

modern science The Swami further states 'Modern science is just the beginning to grasp the truth that cause lies in effect, that cause and effect are like the unmanifested and manifested states of the same thing But this truth was taught in India from very ancient time

The atomic theory was first discovered in India by Kanada, the author of the *Vaisheshika* philosophy and in Greece by Democritus, Leucippus and Lucretius It is said that many Greek philosophers from Democritus onward had also imagined matter to consist, in the last resort, of hard indivisible pellets and those pellets were at first called 'atoms' which were incapable of being divided Anaxagorus maintained that those pellets possessed in itself all the characteristic properties of the substance to which it belonged After a long time John Dalton, Lavoisier, Maxwell and other scientists made experiments on atom and considered it to be an essential ingredient of physical science The physicists of the 19th century found that all matter is possessed of inertia and is capable of motion They said that energy is matter, or is in atom which can exist in a number of forms and can change about almost endlessly from one form to another, but it can never be utterly destroyed From generalisation it has been found that the whole universe is built solely of the 90 to 92 types (90 already known and 2 or possibly even more still to be discovered) of atom found on earth

Sir James Jeans is of the opinion that until quite recently, atoms were regarded as the permanent bricks of which the whole universe was built It was towards the end of the last century that Prof Crookes, Lenard, and above all Sir J J Thompson first began to break up the atom "The structures which had been deemed the unbreakable bricks of the universe for more than 2,000 years, were suddenly shown to be very susceptible to having fragments chipped off A mile-stone was reached in 1897 when Thompson showed that these fragments were identical no matter what type of atom they came from, they were of equal weight and they carried equal charges of magnetic electricity On account of this last property they were called 'electrons'" (vide *The Universe Around Us* 1933, p 120) In 1911, experiments by Sir Ernest Rutherford and others revealed the architecture of atom, and

specially Prof Rutherford supposed the atom 'to be constructed like the solar system, the heavy central nucleus playing the part of the sun and the electrons acting the parts of the planets' Prof Rutherford's experiments were afterwards extended by Bohr and other scientists

NOW it can be mentioned that while physical science was still engaged in breaking up the atoms into its component factors, it made the further discovery that the nuclei themselves were neither permanent nor indestructible Prof Jeans writes that in 1896, Becquerel "had found that various substances containing uranium possessed the remarkable property, as it then appeared, of spontaneously affecting photographic plates in their vicinity This observation led to the discovery of a new property of matter, namely, radio-activity" The physicists say that the act of breaking-up of a radio-active atom may be compared to the discharge of a gun, 'the X-particle is the shot fired, the B-particles are the smoke, and the Y-rays are the flash' It is a fact that from time onward the scientists were not at rest, but were engaged in experimenting the field of atoms and discovered many new things and theories which have been recorded in the pages of science It will be interesting to mention here a news or a comment appeared in *The Statesman*, Wednesday, August 30, 1967 The news has been published with the heading, *New Theory on Core of Atom* Let me quote the interesting news which has thrown some new light on the recent discoveries on exploring of atom The news says 'Rochester, August 29—Two Japanese scientists, one a Nobel Prize winner, suggested yesterday that the particles in the nucleus or core of the atom are not pointlike objects, but billowing objects like silk handkerchiefs, report A P Dr Hideki Yukawa and Dr Kashuisa Katayana of Kyoto University in Tokyo presented their report to a gathering of some 350 of the world's leading theoretical physicists meeting at the University of Rochester

"For years, it appeared that the nucleus of the atom was made up only of familiar protons and neutrons with electrons whirling around like planets orbiting the sun But the advent of bigger and bigger atom smasher and accelerators, gave the physicists the power to crack open the nucleus and

out-spilled a mass of strong new particles Dr Yukawa, the Nobel laureate and his group have been trying for years to develop a theory that would accurately describe the particles as being extended in space and time, not as points, and still withstand challenge from other scientists

"Most descriptions of the particles view them as point-line objects, something like vanishingly small balls But Dr Yukawa's theory considers a particle as extended—instead of a ball moving through space in a 'five time' as something like a fluttering silk handkerchief falling to the ground Unlike the ball, if you waved the silk handkerchief in the air and let go, you wouldn't be sure just when it started to fall or when it came to rest, and its exact shape while in motion would be vague"

Now Dr Hideki Yukawa's discovery about the core of atom has explored a new mystery for not only of the physicists, but also of all who are inquisitive to know about atom which is considered as a matrix of the universe by all the scientists and philosophers of all nations

Regarding the atomic theory which was discovered by Kanada in India, it can be said that atom which was regarded by Kanada as the matrix or norm of evolution of the world-appearance, was permanent (*nitya*) and, therefore, unchanging and indivisible (*avibhajya*) The followers of the *Vaisheshika* philosophy hold "तत्र परमाणूनां नित्या, तदन्याऽवयवयोगिन्यनित्या \* \* । तत्र परमाणूनां नित्यं, द्वयनुकादिकं त्वनित्यम्"

i.e. an atom (*paramanu*) is undying and permanent (*nitya*) and everything other than *paramanu* is impermanent and divisible, undying and permanent (*nitya*) and everything other than *paramanu* is impermanent and divisible An atom is permanent and a dyad, composed of two atoms, is impermanent And "तत्र द्वाभ्यां परमाणूभ्यां द्वयणुकं त्रिभिर्द्वयणुकैस्त्रयसरैणुरित्यादिक्रमेणावयविनामुत्पत्तिः" i.e. *dvyanuka* is composed of two monads and *trasarenu* is composed of three dyads, and in this way all the material objects evolved or were created Now it can be asked as to how the action originates in an atom To this Kanada said that the Will of God is the cause for creating action (vibrations) in atom Now it is found that God's Will is the remote cause and triad or

*trasarenu* (combination of three dyads) is the immediate cause for creation of the cosmos. And from the contention of Kanada's plea for permanency and indestructibility of atom, it can be said that science has not yet been able to explore the real mystery of atom as devised by Kanada. But modern science claims that it has been able to unveil the core of the mystery of atom which is recognised as the basic ingredient or energy-mass of evolution of the universe.

Further it can be said that some thousands years ago the seers of the *Upanishads* discovered the truth that everything phenomenal and mental is indestructible and nothing is lost in this universe, but remains after dissolution in its original causal state. As for example, the five gross elements like ether, air, water, fire and earth remain in their causal states after dissolution and they evolve again in gross forms in the time of evolution. Modern science has also discovered this truth, and has forwarded that everything in this universe is indestructible and nothing is lost. So we find that not only in these present days, but also in ancient times, the philosophers of India discovered the laws of nature and harmonized them with the coherent system of science, and this tendency of harmonization is also predominant among the philosophers and the scientists in this modern age.

Swami Abhedananda has tried in various ways to prove in this book, *Religion of the Twentieth Century* that modern science is trying to discover truth which is eternal and religion is also trying to discover and worship truth which is eternal, and, therefore, there is no disharmony or sense of discord between the attempts as well as the goals of both science and religion, and so every seeker after truth should consider science and religion as the best and common means to reach the ultimate goal of harmony and peace. The Swami therefore says "The twentieth century needs a religion which will be in perfect harmony with all the truths discovered by modern science which are based upon the principle of unity in variety, and which regard the material and efficient cause of the universe as one and the same".

But there rises a problem when both monism of science and monism of Vedanta are placed before a man for solution. Swami Abhedananda writes "Vedanta is more logical and

more scientific than the materialistic monism of science" Here the Swami intends to say that idealistic or spiritualistic monism of Vedanta is more logical and scientific than materialistic monism of science. Now what do we mean by materialistic monism as advanced by science? Swami Abhedananda has already discussed this question that science also believes that the same Reality is manifested as both the objective world and the subjective world—as both mind, intelligence understanding, emotion, willing, etc. on one side and as gravitation, electricity, heat, light, motion, etc., on the other side. Therefore, 'the ultimate conclusion of monistic science is unity in variety'. Through the help of this materialistic viewpoint of monism, science also concludes like Herbert Spencer and Immanuel Kant that the Reality or Thing-in-Itself of this expanding universe is unknown and unknowable. But Swami Abhedananda has refuted this monistic view of science and also the objective idealistic views of Herbert Spencer and Immanuel Kant by stating like Sankara that the Reality or the absolute Essence is not altogether unknown and unknowable, as it is known or realized by immediate awareness. So, according to the Swami, one should know how to discriminate monism as advanced by Vedanta from monism as forwarded by science, because the former interprets the absolute Reality through the idealistic or spiritualistic viewpoint and says that when the absolute Reality is intimately known or realized, the world, composed of time, space and causation, is transcended, whereas when the Reality of science is apperceived as unknown and unknowable, the materialistic world remains as manifestation of the Reality which is the common source of all physical and psychical powers and also of both the subjectivity and the objectivity of the universe. In fact, materialistic scientific monism or monism of science naturally lands in dualism like 'neutral monism' as advanced by Prof. Bertrand Russell who fought against mind and matter and hopelessly attempted to get over dualism by postulating the neutral stuff.

## CHAPTER XXX

### UNIVERSAL RELIGION AND VEDANTA

*Universal Religion and Vedanta* is a collection of lectures which were delivered in New York and in India from 1903 to 1922. As the lectures are of the same category or nature, so they have been bunched together to form a book which are pregnant with religious and philosophical thoughts, having an out and out universal outlook. The first book with chapters I to IV contains four lectures on (1) the Sanatana Dharma, (2) The Universal Religion, (3) The Progressive Religion, and (4) The Message of Vedanta, which were delivered in different places at Jamshedpur in Bihar, in 1922, consecutively on the 10th, 12th, 13th and 15th January. Swami Abhedananda was invited by the students and citizens of Jamshedpur and also by the members of the local Vivekananda Society. A public meeting of the residents of Jamshedpur was convened on the 10th January, 1922 at 6 p.m. to accord His Holiness Swami Abhedananda a cordial welcome to the town. The gathering of over two thousand souls, including many European and American gentlemen, were charmed by the lucid and elegant style of English lecture.

The first lecture on the *Sanatana Dharma* was delivered on the 10th January, 1922 at the Milanee Pandal in reply to the welcome address. He says that he spent 25 years in England and America in preaching the culture, religion, and philosophy of India, along with the universal gospel of his beloved Master, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. His revered predecessor Swami Vivekananda represented the Sanatana Dharma of India before the Parliament of Religions, held in Chicago in 1893. He created the field in the Western lands and invited Swami Abhedananda and Swami Saradananda to assist him in his work of preaching the message of Vedanta. The people of the Western countries were attracted with the non-sectarian universal religion and philosophy of India and they cordially welcomed Swami Vivekananda and the others and were eager to learn Indian religion and philosophy. Swami

Vivekananda gave an outline of the Sanatana Dharma and its lofty ideas and universal ideal which afterwards conquered the hearts of the Western people

Swami Abhedananda with his majestic look and personality says in his lecture with sweet and charming voice "But what do you mean by Sanatana Dharma? The Swami says that Sanatana Dharma is an eternal religion which knows no particular set of doctrines and dogmas, but exists from the beginningless past and leads mankind to the path of everlasting peace, love and freedom. This eternal religion brings solution to man's problems of life as well as of the world, full of tears, anxieties and cares. This eternal religion is free from all kinds of sectarianism, bigotry and narrowness.

In course of his lecture, the Swami has praised the people of America for their openmindedness, thirst for learning and act of appreciation. He says "They (the Americans) love education and know also the real ideal of education. They are more advanced in their material life, and now they have come to know that material prosperity is not the be-all and end-all of life, and they are eager to know the lofty Indian ideals and universal Vedantic principles from us. Our teachings in America have made a tremendous change in the religious field of that country \* \* The churches were talking against us and calling us names. I was the only Hindu then in the United States, and I had to fight tooth and nail against all false reports against the Hindus which were mostly made by the missionaries."

Swami Abhedananda has differentiated the highest ideal of Vedanta from that of modern spiritualism which is predominant in the Western countries and specially in America. He states that modern spiritualism teaches that soul exists after death and can communicate with those friends who have gone to the next world. The scientist Sir Oliver Lodge is one of the believers of spiritualism, and the Swami said that he had an opportunity to hear his lecture in San Francisco, California, and he (the Swami) was astonished to see the blind faith of that celebrated scientist. He then mentions the doctrine of the Christian Scientists, who, on the contrary, denied the existence of matter and called it a delusion or *maya*, as



has been said in Advaita Vedanta. They naturally maintain that the material bodies of the living beings are delusions and, therefore, disease of the body is also delusion or false. This idea differs from that of the modern spiritualists, but is similar to that of the Vedanta philosophy to some extent, which admits that the material body is destroyable and the soul which resides in the body, is immortal. But does the doctrine of the Vedanta philosophy admit it? It seems they do not, but their doctrine partially coincides with the sublime doctrine of Advaita Vedanta.

The Swami states that matter and mind come from the common source which is known as the Brahman. Sanatana Dharma teaches this truth. Swami Vivekananda preached this universal religion before the world. He opened the way and I followed his path, and you are here to follow our path. 'You are the children of Bliss. If you can conquer your own mind, you will be able to conquer the whole world.' The Swami relates the story of Alexander the Great and the poor Sannyasin. The Greek Emperor called the Sannyasin to meet him, but the Sannyasin refused to meet him and so the Emperor gave order to cut off his head. But the Sannyasin remained fearless and said that though the material body is destroyed, yet the immortal soul is not dead. The Emperor was astonished. But this is the teaching of spiritual India. This universal teaching was personified in Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna. He realized God and realized that the Divine Mother or Sakti and the Brahman are one and the same. He preached the gospel of truth, harmony and peace. We were at first agnostics and students of science, and so "when we saw him and watched his life by day and by night, we found in him the manifestations of Krishna, Rama, Buddha, Christ and other *Avatars*. He lived in Godconsciousness (*samadhi*) almost all the time. He had no other ideal in his life than the realization of God, the Creator of the universe. So his ideal life should be followed, and we should shape our life in his ideal. Purity of heart as the precondition of Godconsciousness as well as of God-vision. Therefore, my friends, you first purify your heart by doing unselfish works for the good of all, and then realize that all the works which you do during your life-time, are the acts of worship of the Supreme."

The second chapter contains *Universal Religion* which was delivered in the Tata Institute on the 12th January, 1922. Swami Abhedananda says that religion as Hinduism or Brahminism is really known as the Aryan religion of *Arya-dharma*. 'This Aryan religion has no particular God, but is based upon the fundamental and spiritual laws which govern our soul-life. It is not sectarian, but is universal and it embraces the ideals of all religions of the world. The teachings of the Vedas are broad and unlimited in their scope, and all the religions of the world are based upon the universal ideal of the Vedic religion. Most of the doctrines of Buddhism can be traced back to the teachings of the *Upanishads*, and the ideals of Christianity can also be traced back to that of Buddhism. Jesus the Christ came to India through Central Asia accompanied by the traders, and learned the ideals of Buddhism and practised the Hindu *Yoga-sadhana*, which I have already related in my book, *How to be a Yogi*. In the *Unknown Life of Jesus*, the Russian traveller Nicholas Notovitch has given an account of a manuscript preserved in the Hemis monastery of Ladak, in which there was an authentic account of the unknown life of Jesus the Christ. I have also seen that manuscript and made it to be translated by a Lama of the Hemis monastery. There might be a difference of opinion on the subject, but as I have already said that there is a good deal of truth in the statement (vide also the Swami's Bengali book, *Kashmir O Tibbete*)

The Swami further says that fanaticism is not religion, as fanaticism proceeds from ignorance, and ignorance is the cause of bondage and suffering. So we should remove ignorance by the realization of the true ideal of religion. Religion is divided into two parts, essential and non-essential. The non-essential parts are the doctrines, dogmas, blind belief etc., and the essential parts are self-control, self-mastery and above all the realization of the *Atman*. We should realize our *Atman* and should remove all limitations. And when the essential parts of religion are realized, there arises a real sense of unity among all the followers of all religions.

Swami Abhedananda says that modern science teaches unity and harmony, because knowledge of truth is also the goal of science. Science has also proved that the world-process is the

manifestation of one primordial Energy, and electricity, light, heat, sound, etc., are the manifestations of the same Divine Energy. The Mental Science has proved that the cosmic mind is the sum total of the individual minds and the cosmic mind is the mind of God who really starts the work of evolution.

The Swami states that all doctrines like dualism, qualified non-dualism and non-dualism are included in the domain of the universal religion, because the ultimate goal which is God-realization is the same, the names or faiths or *sadhanas* only differ, but the ultimate aim is one and the same. Now what do we mean by the word 'eternal'? It connotes the idea of beginningless and endlessness. But that does not mean the Christian hell which has no beginning and end, but beginninglessness or eternity implies that we all have come to this human world after passing hundreds and thousands of cycles of birth and death, and shall end our journey as soon as we shall realize our immortal *Atman* the prime source and background of the world-process.

What we mean by the doctrine of dualism', the Swami continues. "The believer of the doctrine of dualism admits the existence of a Creator who is different from the individuals and the world. The doctrine of qualified non-dualism is different from this belief, as it holds that God is the stupendous whole whereas the individual souls are the parts. The non-dualism is again different from qualified non-dualism, as it believes that every soul or everything is non-different from God the Absolute. It has been said before that the universal religion embraces them all. Jesus the Christ also realized this truth and so he loved all beings and all creatures of the world."

The Swami then states "What do you mean by 'love'? Love means the expression of oneness. What you call love, is nothing but the expression of that oneness. It is the feeling of oneness. \* \* So, my friends, if your heart overflows with the ideals of Divine love, you will see that Divine love is manifested in humanity and all human beings are but parts and parcels of your true Self."

Swami Abhedananda then concludes "The days of commercialism and naive materialism are passing by. The world is wide awake to find the universal religion which shakes off forever and ever all selfishness, greed and ambition. Let me

recite a line of the *Mhamna-stotra* by Pushpadanta 'vaichitradyu-kutila nanapatha-jusham', etc i.e., as the rivers rising from different mountains, run crooked or straight towards the ocean, so all sectarian religions rising from different points of view, run crooked or straight towards the universal Being which is the embodiment of existence, knowledge and bliss"

The third chapter contains *Progressive Hinduism* which was delivered in the Jamshedpur Association. Swami Abhedananda says that the word 'Hindu' is used for us, because we believe in Hinduism or *Arya-dharma*, i.e., the religion which knows no sectarianism and fanaticism. We are descendants of the *Arya Rishis*, the seers of Truth, who lived, it is said, in Kashmir and Punjab in the Vedic period. The word 'Panjab' represents the land of the five rivers, Sutlej, Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi and Beas. These five rivers fall into one river which is called Indus, the Sanskrit name of which is Sindhu. There are two other rivers, Sarasvati and Drishadvati. It is said that the name 'Hindu' was derived from 'Indus'. The Swami said "In Persian language the sound of 'S' is pronounced as the sound of 'H' \* \* In place of the river Sindhu they (Parisians) call Hindu. And afterwards those people who lived on the banks of the river Sindhu, were known as the Hindus". The religion of the Hindus is known as Hinduism. Hinduism is equally known as Sanatana Dharma or eternal and universal religion. The progressive religion believes that the same infinite Spirit is worshipped by the followers of different religions. Father, Brahman, Vishnu, Siva, Kali are the names of the same Reality and this Reality is conceived as both Father and Mother. He or She is again conceived as the bestower of good or evil, but, in truth, He or She gives neither good, nor bad, as He or She being the absolute Reality in essence, is the witnesslike absolute consciousness. The absolute Reality is not the bestower of goodness or badness. Men enjoy bliss or suffer from cares and anxieties for their own *karmas* i.e., for good or bad *karmas*, as the works bring good or bad results (*phalas*) and men reap the results according to their works. So for these good or bad results, God or the Reality is not responsible. Men themselves are responsible for their own *karmas*.

The Swami continues "The more you understand

your own true religion, the more you will realize that there is no difference in the ideals of religion" The manners and customs of the people—the environment and the climatic conditions of the countries—only differ, but the abiding essence, the absolute Reality of all men and all objects neither differs, nor changes. It is constant and immutable, and transcends all changes, and also transcends all names and forms. Politics is not the field of our freedom, but our religion embraces the higher ideals of freedom which we call *mukti* or salvation. *Mukti* is freedom from the bondage of ignorance ornescience. We are enchained with the slavery of our selfish desires and as soon as we shall be free from the bondage of selfishness, we shall attain freedom, which is no other than the attainment of Godconsciousness. But at present we are like the slaves 'but the moment you raise yourselves and assert your independence that 'I am not a slave, I am a child of God and God is working through me', who can stop you?'

"Spirit of modern progressive Hinduism", says Swami Abhedananda, "was shown by the great Master Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa who was the master of Swami Vivekananda. It was he who showed that the need of the present day is the brotherly feeling and toleration of all religions." \* \* He is regarded as the *Yugavatara*, the Incarnation of Divinity, in this age. He came to show the way of harmony and progress."

The fourth chapter contains *Message of Vedanta* which was delivered in 'L' Town on the 15th January, 1922. Swami Abhedananda says that the word *Vedanta* conveys the idea of the 'end of wisdom'. The knowledge portion (*gnanakanda*) of the Vedas is called the *Upanishad* and this *Upanishad* is known as Vedanta. The Vedas are four: Rig, Sama, Yajus and Atharva. The Rig Veda contains over 1 000 hymns in praise of the gods like Indra, Varuna, Agni, Mithra and so on. The *mantras* of the Yajur-Veda are meant for rituals and ceremonies. The hymns of the Sama Veda are sung with different notes in three registers (*sthānas*). Generally five Vedic notes like *prathama*, *dvitiya*, etc., are used in the Vedic *gana*, the *samanas*. The Greeks used in their songs five notes like the Hindus. The Chinese also use five notes in their songs. The Atharva Veda contains invocation of the various deities and the methods of curing different kinds of diseases. The Vedas are divided into

two, *karmakanda* and *jnanakanda*. The *jnanakanda* is known as Vedanta. The *jnanakanda* consists of the *Aranyakas* and the *Upanishads*, while the *karmakanda* consists of the *Samhitas* and the *Brahmanas*. The Vedas were popularised afterwards in the *Puranas*, the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata* and the *Tantras*. Besides, there are other philosophies like the *Sankhya* of Kapila, the *Patanjala* of Patanjali, the *Nyaya* of Gautama, the *Vaisesika* of Kanada, the *Mimamsa* of Jaimini and the *Brahmasutra* or Vedanta of Vadarayana. The *Mimamsa* and the *Brahmasutra* are also known as the *Purva-Mimamsa* and the *Uttara-Mimamsa*. The teachings of the *Upanishads* and the *Vedantasutra* are the living philosophies of India. Though the fundamental principle and the truth are the same, yet these philosophies differ particularly in their arguments and ways or methods. The spirit is the predominant and basic principles of those philosophies. The *prana* or *pranavakti* in each individual is different, but those philosophies state that *prana* or the life-force is, in essence, the eternal life which can be said to be the *Atman* or the immortal Brahman. The message of Vedanta lies in the fact that God the Absolute or the absolute Brahman is the Soul of our souls, the Life of our lives and the Mind of our minds, nay, it is the be-all and end-all of evolution and of all the living beings. This Brahman cannot be known by ordinary mind, but when the mind is entirely purified and is transformed into shining consciousness or *chaitanya*, then it is fully appreciated, and for that reason Sri Ramakrishna has said that the Brahman is "*shuddha-maner gochara*", but "*mana-buddhir agochara*" i.e., the Brahman is apprehended by the purified mind and is not appreciated by ordinary mind and intellect.

The Swami says "We have come from perfection and shall return to perfection. There is no such thing as eternal perdition for all. No soul will be lost, but all will find that this infinite perfection which is the base of our existence, is latent in each one of us." We are not separated from the Brahman, but we live and have our beings all the time in the Brahman. The message of Vedanta is that the Brahman is the only happiness, and all other happiness are impermanent. "Therefore the message of Vedanta is to attain the true happiness, because that is the goal of our earthly existence."

The Swami continues "You think that God is dwelling above the clouds somewhere in the heaven, but there is no physical heaven, it is a mental state. Really hell and heaven are merely the creation of our individual mind, and if there be any heaven, that is God the Absolute which shines in you, in me and in all individual beings, nay, in everything in the universe. The message of Vedanta is the highest message that any scripture can give to the world. Every time you move, and remember that the power that helps you to move from one place to another, is not your power, but is God's power. You must worship God in spirit, and not merely in the temples or in holy places. He is the Spirit, and *moksha* is achieved when we shall know Him in spirit"

There are different systems of Yoga, the Swami states, and the Karma Yoga is one of the ways for realizing God. Every *karma* should be made in the spirit of worship and then that *karma* or work will not bind you, but will release you from the chain of delusion or *maya*. Besides, there are Jnana Yoga, Raja Yoga and Bhakti Yoga. The Raja Yoga is the method of concentration and meditation, the Bhakti Yoga is the method of love and devotion towards God, and Jnana Yoga is the method of *vichara* or discrimination between the real and the unreal. However, all the Yogas are the methods or paths to reach the same ultimate goal, the absolute Brahman. So practise Yoga and think that by practising Yoga you are marching towards the Divine union of the *jivatman* and the *Paramatman*, which is the prime goal of the *Yoga-sadhana*.

The fifth chapter deals with *Ideal of a Religious Institution*. This lecture was delivered in 1922. After listening to the report of the Vivekananda Society at Jamshedpur, Swami Abhedananda says that the aims and objects of every religious and philanthropic institution should be to help the needy, to educate the mass, and to propagate the spiritual ideals of our holy scriptures, especially of the Vedanta philosophy, the attitude of which is non-sectarian and universal. Selfishness or ego-centric idea is a curse to a man and to a nation. A selfish man is really dead in the world, because the deeds and efforts of his entire life are devoted to satisfy his own petty self and thus he entangles himself in the chain of ignorance or *maya* and, consequently, lives in this world of desires and passions.

as a slave. So we shall shake off the chain of selfishness and shall dedicate our life for the cause of others. "In this age of materialism, commercialism, and unbelief, we are drifting away from the path of righteousness, and we have forgotten the real spiritual ideas of our life." \* \* We do not realize that God dwells within us and that we are part and parcel of the *Virat Purusha*, the all-pervading Divine Being, who dwells in all living creatures. We are really indebted to our near and dear ones, to our neighbours and to our nation. So we should pay off those debts by offering our good will and unselfish works and love. We shall be pure, because purity of heart brings God-vision."

In fact the Swami says, the world is a great school, and we are learning different lessons of life. But to bring those lessons into action, we should pay off the debts which we owe to the world. The greatest debt is the realization of the *Atman*. We have forgotten the highest truth for self-delusion or *maya*, so we shall have to go beyond self-delusion and shall know the Divinity that shines always in the heart. Love yourself in the truest sense and love all the beings of the universe, because love is God and God is love. Follow the disinterested love for the humanity that Buddha taught 2,500 years ago. Follow the ideals of art, culture, education and religion of the Buddhist age, because "during the Buddhist age India enjoyed the highest glory and that glory reached its zenith in every line, in religion, in sculpture, in painting and in education. The golden Buddhist age was glorified in educational systems, in the line of universities, in the line of preachers, in the line of hospitals, and in the lines of philosophy, logic, science and medicine." The Swami further mentions about the Chinese traveller, Hsuen Tsang and also other noted teachers of different Buddhist universities and students, and said to follow the ideals of those past days with a new and scientific outlook to make the present-day societies noble and enlightened. He further states to acquire all kinds of knowledge, i.e., knowledge of everything *jñā-selāi theke chandipūāth* (i.e. knowledge beginning from the repairing of the shoes to the recitation of the sacred *Chandi*) to make our life rich and practical.

The sixth chapter contains *Universal and Synthetic Religion*, delivered at the Jubilee Hall, Rangoon, on October 25, 1822,



Tuesday, just after the Swamis return from America Dr N N Parekh, M.L.C., presided Swami Abhedananda says that like Hinduism, Judaism and Christianity, Buddhism was one of the religions which before the birth of Christ spread from Siberia to Ceylon and from China to Egypt without any bloodshed The Prophets of all religious systems were the central figures in their religions and each of them gave to the world his experiences in the spiritual progress towards the realization of the ultimate goal, or ideal of their religions As two faces were not alike, the Prophets or Messengers of different religions could not hold one set of ideas and could not enforce those different ideas upon the minds of all Now, a personality is essential for giving a driving force to a religion and to show a Divine ideal of it and the religious organisations also grow around that personality But if the followers of a religion out of their narrow and sectarian views centre around that personality leaving the lofty ideal of it, then that religion and the religious organisation which grow around that personality, will be turned into a vacant devil's house So personality is not great in comparison to its ideal and contribution Swami Abhedananda has given a hint of this idea in the Introduction to his book *Great Saviours of the World* There he said that one should not be addicted to any blind faith and narrow view that his God, his Prophet, or his spiritual Master, is only superior and true and only guide to the path of spiritual *sadhana* and experience and others are inferior and false "Shall we be so narrow, intolerant and prejudiced as to accept only the Saviour, simply because our forefathers worshipped him, and on that very ground alone, reject and disregard the other Prophets and Saviours of the world Nay, the time has come when we must put aside all sectarianism and bigotry and become broad and liberal so as to follow them all and place them upon the altar of that universal religion which is all-embracing and infinite in its scope' Similarly, in his Rangoon lecture, the Swami says that no religion which is founded upon the personality of its founder, can be called the universal religion "So in trying to find out the fundamental principles of universal religion, they would have to remember that it must not be based upon the limitation of any personality, but upon the eternal spiritual laws which govern their life"

The Swami continues that God is both personal (*sakara*) and impersonal (*nirakara*), determinate (*saguna*) and indeterminate (*nirgunai*), and is again beyond of all limitations and adjuncts (*upadhis*) of these positive and negative categories. Sri Ramakrishna has said "God may be *sakara* and *nirakara*, *saguna* and *nirguna* and also be more than those (*aro kata ki*)". The Swami comparatively discusses the religions of Christ, Mohammed, Buddha and other Saviours, and said that Truth preached by them, may vary in their interpretations and words of teachings, but, in essence, they are one and universal. "They are not separate from the truth discovered by science from the truth discovered by Buddha or Christ. Truth is one without the second and that must be the fundamental principle of a universal religion." Now that fundamental Truth must be searched for, must be regarded as indispensable for our life, and must be realized for cutting asunder the knots of nescience or *maya*.

The seventh chapter contains *Philosophy of the Vedanta Society*, delivered in St. Louis, America, in the month of May, 1904, when Swami Abhedananda visited the place on the invitation by one of the members for necessary arrangements for an exhibition of the publication of the Vedanta Society of New York to be held at the World's Fair.

Swami Abhedananda says that Truth is one, it cannot be many. The absolute Truth is one, but its manifestations are manifold, and these manifestations are not real, being under the sway of nescience. We are one with the Truth, but we have made ourselves separate from the Truth for false-knowledge. The false-knowledge or *bhramanti* makes us think that we are different from the Truth, the absolute Brahman. The Swami says that we identify our Soul or Spirit with the gross body and this identification "prevails from ignorance about our true Self which deludes us." The moment we understand that we are the Soul, we become free from the bondage of flesh and blood of the body", and this freedom from the bondage of flesh and blood is the attainment of *Atmanana*.

The eighth chapter contains *Universal Ideal of the Vedantic Religion*. This lecture was delivered by Swami Abhedananda on the 21st February, 1922, at Raja Maidan, Dacca (now in Pakistan), and was reported by S. K. Dasgupta, M.A. In this

lecture, the Swami says about the universal outlook and ideal of Santana Dharma. The Swami advises his beloved audience to revive the sacred and lofty ideas and ideal of the past, of the Vedic and Hindu periods, with a new and progressive outlook in this present national scientific age. He instructs the people of India to follow the living and loving ideal of the great patriot-saint Swami Vivekananda as well as of his Master, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, the Prophet of this new age. He says that there should not be any idea of difference in colour and creed, or of caste prejudice that prevails among the people of India, as all human beings are children of Bliss and Immortality. He has instructed all to follow the universal teachings of Gautama Buddha, Sri Chaitanya and Sri Ramakrishna, who were the embodiments of infinite love, compassion and fellow-feeling, not only for the human beings, but also for all the living beings and non-living objects of the universe. The Swami says that whenever these supreme qualities manifest in a man, he is transformed into a God-man and his false-knowledge is instantly replaced by the right-knowledge of the absolute Brahman.

The Appendix contains *Vedanta as Interpreted by the Western Scholars*, Swami Abhedananda presents in it some philosophical thoughts as contributed by Prof. Max Muller, John Davis and Prof. F. W. Hopkins. He says that Prof. Max Muller maintained for practical purposes that the Vedantist would hold that the whole phenomenal world, both in its subjective and objective character, should be accepted as real. But Advaita Vedanta admits the subjective world as only real, and other philosophical systems admit that both the aspects are real.

The Swami says that John Davis was of the opinion that the *Sankhya* system of thought, as advanced by Kapila, is the earliest attempt on record. Schopenhauer and Hartmann were influenced by the *Sankhya* philosophy to some extent. Regarding the views of Prof. E. W. Hopkins, the Swami says that Prof. Hopkins was of the opinion that both the early Greek philosophers, Thales and Parmenides, imbibed the ideas and thoughts of Indian philosophy. Now a band of European, German and French scholars have become interested in the Vedanta philosophy.

## CHAPTER XXXI

### VEDANTA TOWARDS RELIGION

*Vedanta Towards Religion* is the collection of seventeen lectures on the study of the philosophical and religious thoughts of India in a comparative way. The lectures were delivered from time to time on various occasions in different philosophical, educational and religious institutions of the United States of America before talented audience from 1907 to 1920. Swami Abhedananda's keen intellect, profound knowledge and scholarship in the systems of philosophy and religion of both East and West as well as his analytic and comparative treatment on the subjects with deep and penetrating insight and intuitive perception have made the lectures or discussions very rich and thoughtful and at the same time very much lucid and appreciative.

*Vedanta Towards Religion* is a thesis on philosophy and religion, discussed from different angles of vision. It attempts to prove the identity of two orders of reality, the transcendental one and the phenomenal one, and ventures to establish a relation between the theoretical or speculative side and the practical or intuitive side. Swami Abhedananda says that philosophy is flesh and bone, whereas religion is blood and life, and these two things make up the whole of the absolute Truth. In other words, it can be said that philosophy itself is religion, because a synthetic and perfect system of thought invariably reveals the inner core of knowledge or wisdom which exists already in man.

The Swami has made it clear that Vedānta philosophy and Vedantic religion admit the process of evolution, both external and internal—material and spiritual. He views that as the whole universe evolved gradually from the causal to subtle state and from the subtle to gross material state, from the womb of the primordial Energy (*Prakriti*) which is known as the norm or matrix of creation or projection, is also the nature and condition of the human world. Both evolution and involution adopt gradual process. In the human world, we find that

the human beings evolve from the causal to the subtle and from the subtle to the gross material plane, and they rise gradually from the material to the ethical or moral plane, from the moral to the religious plane, and from the religious to the spiritual plane

In respect of doctrinal point of view, we find the same evolutionary process when men of most material outlook proceed to the goal of God-realization, gradually from dualism to qualified non-dualism and from qualified non-dualism to non-dualism or monism. The states of consciousness (*jnana*) or those of Divine revelation (*anubhuti*) involve also the grades of gradual evolution. So we find a close relation between philosophy and higher science, or between religion and science. The eminent scientists like Profs Max Plank, Eddington, Jeans, Whitehead and others are of the opinion that there prevails no conflict between philosophy and science. Prof A N Whitehead specially appeals to the philosophers to bring together two streams of thought, philosophical and scientific, into a coherent system. He writes in his work, *Science and the Modern World* "It should be the task of the philosophical schools of the century to bring together the two streams into an expression of the world-picture derived from science, and thereby end the divorce of science from the affirmation of our aesthetic and ethical experiences." Similarly, Prof Max Plank says in his *Where is Science Going*, that science is the complement of religion and, therefore, there is no conflict between science and religion. He writes "There can never be any real opposition between religion and science, for one is the complement of the other." The philosophers like Prof C E M Joad and Prof. Hirsck have given stress upon the idea of bringing science and philosophy into a coherent unity. Swami Abhedananda is also very hopeful that in near future there will be perfect wedding between the final conclusion of philosophy and that of modern science. Prof Hirsck has proved in his books, *The Foundations of Metaphysics in Science and Nature, Mind and Modern Science*, that higher science has no conflict with philosophy.

Swami Abhedananda says that everyone in this universe will not be lost, but be saved sooner or later, and each human being has free choice for his spiritual progress and each one is

free enough to choose either the path of Yoga, or the path of Bhakti, or the path of Jnana, or the path of Karma, to reach one and the same goal, the attainment of the immediate knowledge of the Absolute

In the first chapter the Swami has explained the problems of Vedanta, Theosophy, Spiritualism, Buddhism, New Thought Movement, Psychology, Ethics, etc., and has said by quoting the sayings of the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* "By knowing what, can one know everything of the universe" (*ekasmin vijnate sarva-vijnatam bhavati*) Because the Brahman is the source or fountainhead of all the knowledge of the universe and it is the substratum (*adhithana*), and so if we realize it (the Brahman) as our own being, we shall realize everything of the world. The Brahman is like the inter-connecting thread of the garland of pearls and it is the base and the goal.

In the second chapter the Swami has called into action the theoretical aspect of philosophy and has instructed us to apply that in our practical life. He has discussed the doctrines of the schools of dualism, qualified non-dualism and non-dualism or monism, and has said that all these schools are the gradual steps towards one and the same Brahman. He has stated "When one realizes that his body is the temple wherein dwells the Divinity and identifies himself with his body, he says 'I am nothing. Thou art mine all, Thou art the Creator, I am the creature'. When he sees the Divine image that is within him, he says 'I am part and parcel of Thee'. And when he sees the Spirit, which is divine and immortal, he says 'I and my Father are one'. In fact, a man should realize his own essence, the *Atman* or the Brahman.

The third chapter has been dealt with the ideal of Vedanta and its methods and attainment. There the Swami has dealt with both theoretical side, approaching through intellect and reason, and practical side, laying stress upon the immediate experience of the Absolute. Regarding the speciality of Vedanta, he says "Vedanta does not go on speculating and speculating theorising and theorising, like other philosophies, but it starts by taking the present conditions of our life as they are and then shows the way out of it, by removing their cause. The cause of such a slavery is nothing but our ignorance of the Truth." Ignorance (*ajñāna*) is no other than the non-knowledge

about the absolute knowledge, and realization (*aparokshanubhuti*) means the simultaneous functions of correction of error (*bhramti-apunodana*) and revelation of the Brahman-knowledge (*jnana-prakasha*)

In the fourth chapter, Swami Abhedananda has discussed Vedanta in daily life. In this chapter he has shown the practical applicability of the Vedantic principles and truth in our life. He says that we shall have to live the life of Vedanta, otherwise Vedanta will merely be a means to our intellectual pleasure, and will not be able to enter into the core of philosophy and of religion. Swami Vivekananda was a living example of it. He showed the world how a true Karma Yogi works in the spirit of worship of God which is the practical Vedantic principle and ideal. As all men are bound to work in this world of activities, so they must disinterestedly work for God and for the people and then selfless work will purify their heart and will take them to the temple of God, the Absolute. The Swami has said that we must be strong in every walk of our life, physical, mental, and spiritual. The practice of Raja Yoga helps us in this respect in acquiring their strength. Sri Krishna has emphasised this type of work in the *Gita*, and says that they are misers, who desire for the fruits or results of their works—'*kripanah phala-hetavah*'. So works should be done without the hope of results.

The fifth chapter contains discussions on ethics of Vedanta. The Swami writes that ethics must be the foundation of religion, because perfect morality and highest standard of ethics must be at the root of a true religion. The eternal ethical laws are included in three broad categories like *dharma*, *dana* and *daya*. The foundation of the whole of Indian ethics is based upon these three 'D's'—*dharma*, *dana* and *daya*—religion, charity and compassion. Charity involves an element of self-denial, 'compassion' creates sympathy or same feeling between two minds and 'religion' animates and elevates the mind and turns it into shining power of discrimination (*vichara*) that rejects unreality and accepts reality and thus helps men to realize the *Atman* which is above intellect and reason.

The sixth chapter deals with the true basis of morality. Morality is an ethical quality, and it proceeds from virtuous acts. Judgment helps men in the act of virtue. The Swami

has surveyed in this connection the ethical philosophies of different Greek philosophers and other philosophers of the West. According to Plato, morality or moral fabric is based upon justice, and by justice he meant the State. Plato believed that social ethics govern the sensuous principle, and the social institutions can suppress the lower nature of man. Virtue begins in the State. Aristotle differed from Plato and said that moral element in man, being the outcome of the physical nature, is not purely intellectual. But Socrates regarded moral conduct as the result of rational enlightenment while Aristotle held that the former proceeds from the latter. Aristotle believed that man is a political animal and so a society can produce a truly human and moral life. The Stoics differed somewhat from Socrates and Aristotle. The Stoics admitted the utility and influence of nature upon human mind and so they instructed to follow nature and to live in harmony with nature. They believed that pleasure comes accidentally, and, consequently, whatever action ends in pleasure, cannot be moral. But this morality or moral nature was absolutely denied by the sceptic Epicurians. The Epicurians can be compared to the Charvakas of India to some extent. Like the Charvakas, the Epicurians advised to seek pleasure and avoid pain and to live in this world with material pleasure.

In the Middle Ages, there evolved the scholastic thought of morality in Europe, and the ecclesiastical authorities had to face many difficulties for propagating their ethical thoughts among the people. Then came the reformation in the 16th century and the philosophers arose in different parts of Europe to discuss afresh various problems of moral law, soul and God. But all these things ended in the sceptical and nihilistic doctrines of David Hume. Immanuel Kant appeared in Germany and aroused the philosophy of Hume from its dogmatic slumber. Kant said that moral law is not a hypothetical imperative that promulgates 'that such and such means will end in such and such results, it is rather a *categorical imperative* and originates in pure reason "which is autonomous, one, and universal". Kant rejected both utilitarian morality and theological morality, because utilitarian morality is conditioned by the objects of desire and theological morality depends upon punishment and reward that proceed from a personal God. According to



Kant, reason is the highest interpreter of the Bible as well as the foundation of an ethical religion that lay in the heart of all human beings. The post-Kantian philosophers like Fichte, Schelling, Hegel and others followed Kant, but also developed the system of moral philosophy in their own special ways. Afterwards Schopenhauer came and taught that all our actions proceed from certain motives which can be known as desire to further well-being and desire to cause will. He divided each human action into four classes, malice, egoism, compassion and asceticism. The first two motives are called will-to-live or affirmation of will, and the last two motives are called denial of will. Schopenhauer said that denial of will-to-live is the true basis of morality, which brings happiness and freedom unto men. Schopenhauer's great disciple Dr. Paul Deussen loved much the ideas and ideals of the *Upanishads* of India and said in his book on *Metaphysics* that the highest ideal of the Christian morality was preached by the *Upanishad* which maintains the recognition of oneness of the individual soul with the universal Soul.

The seventh chapter deals with Vedanta towards religion. Swami Abhedananda says in this chapter that the theoretical side of religion is philosophy and religion is the practical side of philosophy. "Of the tree of knowledge, philosophy is the flower, while religion is the fruit." So it is understood that the Vedanta philosophy is intimately connected with its practical aspect which is religion. Religion is realization itself, or it can be said that religion is realization of the Absolute.

Now the aspect of religion, says Swami Abhedananda, can be divided into several categories like Vedantic religion, universal religion, scientific religion, personal religion, speculative religion, anthropological religion, natural religion, primitive religion, symbolic religion, sectarian or non-sectarian religion, mystical religion, etc. The religion of Vedanta, or the Vedantic religion, is like a huge structure of a palatial building containing many stories or floors—(1) the first storey or floor is monotheistic. The monotheistic Vedantic religion believes in a personal God with manifold qualities, (2) the second storey or floor is ritualistic, ceremonialistic, or symbolic. In this aspect, God is personal and impersonal and beyond both. God assumes many names and forms for the satisfaction of the

devotees. He is both the Father and the Mother—both of masculine character and of feminine character, and again He transcends both the ideas of sex, (3) the third storey or floor is meant for those who go beyond all relativity. But it should be remembered that these divisions of the Vedantic religion are merely conceptual and not real. It is, in truth, universal, undivided, and one. And true religion is absolutely concerned with the knowledge of the Absolute, nay, true religion is itself the Absolute.

Swami Abhedananda is of the opinion that religion of Vedanta is inseparable from science and philosophy, because science and philosophy are nothing but so many attempts of the human efforts to grasp some particular facts and truths and also an appreciation of one and the same eternal Truth, which is known as the infinite Reality. Further, this Vedantic religion recognizes the spiritual growth or evolution in the path of realization. So we should know the true character and highest purpose of Vedantic religion. We must realize universal religion of Vedanta which says that God is seen, or the absolute Brahman is immediately known or given to our intuitive knowledge, when our minds are sufficiently purified and tranquil and are consequently transformed into pure consciousness or *chit*.

The eighth chapter deals with the intrinsic characters of both religion and Vedanta. The intimate relation between religion and Vedanta has already been discussed before. Swami Abhedananda says that religion is a spontaneous outgrowth of spiritual nature of the human beings. The unity in variety is the aim of true religion, and this aim of true religion has been discovered by the sages of India through their super-sensible ecstatic vision. Three phases of religion, dualistic, qualified non dualistic and non-dualistic or monistic are the gradual steps towards Divine realization of the Absolute. There are also other spiritual practices like Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Raja Yoga and Jnana Yoga. These Yogas or the Yogic practices are the *alternative* paths to reach one and the same goal, the Divine realization. Sri Ramakrishna is also in favour of these *alternative* methods of *sadhana* though in the ultimate analysis these methods or spiritual paths lead to the absolute Truth which is all-inclusive and universal.

Swami Abhedananda writes that true and non-sectarian religion is not a mere structure of creeds and doctrines and faiths, but is a living and driving force that brings out all the manifold *sadhanas* or experiences into a coherent system and brings the feeling of intense love for all humanity and for all creatures and establishes eternal peace and harmony on earth. The sectarian religion, on the other hand, lays stress upon mythology, rituals, and doctrines. But it should be remembered that religion transforms our individual self into universal cosmic Self and gives an integral feeling of the Absolute. Dualism, qualified non-dualism and non-dualism (*dvaita*, *ishtheadvaita* and *advaita*)—all these *alternative sadhanas* lead us to one and the same Godconsciousness. There are different *sādhanaś* like so many rivers flowing towards different directions, but all fall at last in one and the same unfathomed ocean.

The ninth chapter deals with theory and practice of Vedantic religion. The universal religion includes both theory and practice, and Swami Abhedananda says 'The theoretical part of Vedanta is known as 'philosophy', but when philosophy is put into practice, it becomes religion of Vedanta'. The Vedanta philosophy also believes in the theory of evolution which has been accepted by modern science. Sometimes it is wrongly believed that Vedanta has borrowed this idea of evolution from science. But that is not correct, as in the *Upanishad* and in the *Samkhya* philosophy of Kapila, the systematic treatment on the theory of evolution has been beautifully recorded. Vedanta has stated that though phenomena evolved in the way of gradual process, yet it evolved from one infinite substance which appears as both mind and matter, as subject and object. The practice is commonly considered as superior to theory, but theory is also an essential part of practice. "Practice means", says the Swami, "a striving with one's whole mind and energy, sense and sensibility, to realize the ideal in question." The God-vision or Godconsciousness is that ideal. So we should strive hard for attaining that ideal and should know that mere intellectual apprehension is meaningless until and unless we realize that Divine ideal as the be-all and end-all of our life.

The tenth chapter treats with the subject on evolution and religion. The Swami says in the outset "Although in the eighteenth century Kant and Laplace attempted for the first

time to intrude into the mystery of creation in the light of Newtonian laws and sought to trace out the beginning of the world from the vast mass of nebulous matter, although Laplace tried to explain the mechanical formation and separation of different planets by the help of his nebular hypothesis, yet the theory of evolution hardly received any *comprehensive scientific treatment before Darwin and Haeckel*" The planetary systems, the sun, the moon, the stars, together with other heavenly and cosmic bodies are subject to change of evolution and involution. The basic material of the universe also changes into various phases of transformation, such as, liquid, gaseous, and solid, before a planet or a cosmic body becomes inhabitable either for vegetable, or for animals, and origin and growth of all human beings were possible step by step. The earliest scientist and philosopher Kapila was the father of the evolution theory in India. The Greek philosophers and the neo-Platonists were likely to be influenced by the ideas of the *Samkhya* school. Plato knew in his life some of the Indian philosophers. From these it appears that there was a link of ideas of philosophy and science regarding the theory of evolution among all the nations of the East, the Middle and Far East and the West. However, the wheel of evolution is rotating from very ancient time and will continue through the endless eternity to maintain an order and a law in this cosmic world. But the supreme Being, the absolute Brahman, is free from this wheel of evolution, because if we admit evolution of the absolute Brahman, then we shall limit it by the categories of time and space and that means we shall reduce the transcending Brahman into a non-eternal and temporal substance. But that is impossible, because though the absolute Brahman is regarded as the fountainhead of all things of the universe yet, in reality, it is the causeless and groundless Brahman. Vedanta further says that from which everything of the universe originates, on which everything is sustained and in which everything rests after dissolution, know it as the Brahman. But the categories of cause and ground are imposed on the Brahman only for explaining the work of creation or projection, which is not, in reality, real. The indeterminate (*nirguna*) Brahman neither becomes the cause, nor the ground, and it is the determinate *isaguna* Brahman, *Ivara* who assumes

the adjuncts of cause and ground. However, the Brahman is the eternal source of peace and happiness and so it should be sought for and be attained for unfastening the fetters of false-knowledge or ignorance (*mithya-pratyaya* or *ajnana*), because when the false-knowledge or ignorance is removed, the self-revealing eternal Brahman is realized.

The eleventh chapter deals with the necessity of religion. Swami Abhedananda writes that material prosperity is the cry of the day and commercial motive moves mankind. The moral and spiritual elements of the human nature are submerged and the brute force seems to have got the upperhand in the universe. So mankind in general is hopelessly wandering through the world without any aim and object. So it wants some guidance and that guidance is religion, which is not merely a set of doctrines and dogmas, but the realization of the immortal *Atman*.

Religion, which is limited by sectarian ideas and beliefs and is guided by blind faith, is not true religion. Swami Abhedananda says that world needs today a religion which will make us forget our narrow individuality and small interests, and which will help us to perceive the Infinite Being. In fact, we should follow a large and universal ideal which will guide our vision and will lead us to the royal road to the Infinite Being. We should intensify our longing and love for the absolute Truth, because that kind of longing and love will lead us to the freedom of the soul and also the freedom from all bondages. It should be remembered that the necessity of true religion widens the limitation of the mind and thus prepares the ground for receiving the divine flash of the absolute Brahman.

The twelfth chapter deals with the aim of true religion. The nature of true religion has already been explained. Swami Abhedananda has historically and beautifully dealt in this chapter the aims and ideals of different religions of different nations. He has specially described about the ideals of the English Churches, and has said "As, in the Middle Ages, the aim of Catholic clergy was to convert the heathens into the Christian faith and to punish the heretics by torture and persecution, so even today we find the same spirit of fanaticism goading on many of the Missionaries who do not hesitate to

commit similar inhuman crimes in non Christian lands in the name of their religion' The pages of religious history are likewise filled with such horror of persecution, massacres and all sorts of diabolical crimes committed by the priests and fanatics of different nations for establishing the creeds, the rituals, and the ceremonies of their own religions So these are not the works of the followers of true religion which knows no enmity, sectarianism and selfish interest "True religion", says Swami Abhedananda, "does not consist in following a creed, or in believing in dogmas, doctrines, or spiritual writings, nor does it consist in holding aloft the banner of a particular Prophet and by joining a sect, or a denomination, but its aim is to lift the individual souls above the limitations of the senses and to bring it in communion with the Infinite" Therefore aim and object of true religion are the realization of the absolute Being which shines supreme in its own undying and surpassing glory

The thirteenth chapter deals with unity in variety of religions The Swami raises the question 'Where is the harmony? How can we find peace? Harmony and peace will come only by seeing the unity in variety of religions, but where is that unity?' In truth, we do not find this unity or harmony in the scriptures, nor in doctrines and dogmas, nor in the lives of the founders of many religious faiths, but in the highest ideal of all religions and also in worshipping the *Atman* in the core of our heart, which is the living sanctuary of God the Absolute

The fourteenth chapter contains universality of Vedantic religion Swami Abhedananda says that the word 'Vedanta' conveys the idea of the ultimate knowledge reached by all relative knowledge The relative knowledge means the knowledge related to the phenomenal objects or the sense objects According to strict logic, the phenomenal relative knowledge is not a true kind of knowledge, and the knowledge of the absolute Brahman is the real knowledge Swami Abhedananda has clarified elsewhere that in knowledge of the chair and in knowledge of the Brahman, knowledge is one and the same, whereas the contents, the chair and the Brahman only differ In his book, *Divine Heritage of Man*, he has said that the common sense is the Divine sense In his lecture on *Unity and Har-*

mony, he has also said "We should use our judgment, because common sense is the best sense which the Lord has given us. This common sense will develop into Divine sense if we protect it from being crushed by the weight of ignorance and superstition." In fact, the self-luminosity or the self-revealing nature is inherent in every kind or every piece of knowledge, and thus self-revealing nature is an abiding essence of the absolute Brahman, as it is neither an attribute (*guna*), nor an adjunct (*upadhi*), of the Absolute. So when we are immediately aware of the Brahman-knowledge, the intrinsic nature of all kinds of knowledge whether phenomenal, or intellectual, or intuitional, or scientific, are known or revealed, and so the *Upanishad* or *Vedanta* says '*ekashmin vijnate sarva vijnatam bhavati*'. And now it will not be difficult to understand why Swami Abhedananda has said. The idea is that the 'end of wisdom' means the goal which is reached by all relative knowledge, by all knowledge which proceeds from the phenomenal world, or from our sense-perception." Further, the Swami says "Where is that wisdom? \* \* Is it outside our bodies? No, it pervades the whole universe. It is in outside, as also is in inside. It is everywhere. We have wisdom in our souls. In fact, our souls are but the manifestations of that infinite wisdom which is the foundation and end of all phenomenal existences."

Now, from this we can get an idea of universality of Vedantic religion. The Swami has further raised the question of those doctrines of dualism, qualified non dualism and non-dualism or monism, and has said that these are the *alternative* methods to reach one and the same Truth. The limiting categories of time, space and causation create obstruction in the path of Divine realization, but when the knowledge of the Absolute is attained, those categories are removed and this removal of the categories or *maya* means the correction of error of false knowledge.

The fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth chapters deal with universal religion of Vedanta, science of universal religion, and ideal of universal religion. These three lectures on universal religion and Vedanta were delivered on different occasions. Swami Abhedananda says that the Brahman is both material and efficient cause (*upadana* and *nimitta karana*) of the universe. It is also the ground or substratum (*adhisthana*) of the world.

But from the strict non-dualistic standpoint of Vedanta, the determinate (*saguna*) Brahman may be recognized as the cause and ground of the universe, but the absolute indeterminate (*nirguna*) Brahman is neither the cause, nor the ground, being absolutely raised above all kinds of category or adjunct

Our individual self (*jivatman*) is enchained with the fetters of *maya*, and it always struggles to get away of this bondage, and this struggle is known as the spiritual *sadhana*, and when the self comes to know its real condition of bondage, it regains its power and cuts asunder the chain of slavery and attains to knowledge of the *Atman*

The eighteenth chapter contains steps towards realization Swami Abhedananda says that realization of the Absolute is described in Vedanta as the highest ideal of earthly existence as well as the final goal of all religions If there be a beginning, there must be an end, because eternal marching towards an unknown destination is meaningless So knowingly or unknowingly, each individual soul is striving for attaining to perfection where absolute peace and happiness reign supreme Now it can be asked as to how an individual one attains realization To this the Swami says that there are some steps towards the path of realization and they bring awakening in the depth of the soul, and bring purification of heart, right discrimination, non-attachment, etc There are seven tentative steps or stages in the progress to realization In the seventh stage, spiritual illumination comes and a sincere man attains to *samadhi* or Nirvana which is no other than Godconsciousness

The nineteenth chapter contains the discussion on Divine realization which is the ultimate goal of all human beings Swami Abhedananda writes "Being and becoming divine are the meaning of realization", and this realization can be attained in this life and not after the grave A realized man feels the presence of Divinity within him and simultaneously in all living creatures The realized man communes with the Divine Being and ultimately becomes one with it

Two appendices have been added which deal with the Vedantic Truth and Unity and Harmony The first lecture was delivered in the University of California in September 6, 1906 In conclusion, the Swami says that the fundamental principle of Vedanta is absolute oneness The Thing-in-itself



is a pure assumption of Kant, a superficiality is not in any way justified by Kant's own data and so the successors of Kant were forced to reject the Kantian Absolute and set up rationalism as opposed to transcendentalism. In fact, Kant's Absolute is separated from the plane of experience whereas the Vedantic Absolute is founded upon an immediate experience of the Absolute, or in the recognition of the forgotten Truth Vedanta gives a rational foundation to religion which harmonizes with the latest conclusions of modern science and philosophy.

The second one, Unity and Harmony, delivered on 18th March, 1915 in the Hindu Temple in San Francisco, California, U.S.A. The lecture, unity and harmony, was delivered after the untimely death of Swami Trigunatitananda, when there were party feelings and inharmony among the students of Vedanta in the Hindu Temple in San Francisco. Swami Abhedananda was lecturing at that time in Los Angeles in South California. The Swami tried to bring a spirit of amity and brotherly feeling among all the members of the Hindu Temple and also among all men of the world who cannot find out a solution to solve all the inharmonies and discords among them. Swami Abhedananda said that universal outlook and universal love are only things which can bring unity and harmony in this world.

## CHAPTER XXXII

### THOUGHTS ON PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

Swami Abhedananda says that, of the tree of knowledge and wisdom, philosophy is the flower and religion is the fruit, philosophy is the theoretical side of religion and religion is philosophy in practice. In India, philosophy means the science of realization or a divine awareness of the Absolute which transcends the categories of time, space and causation. Philosophy may be called a spiritual process by means of which a man sees God face to face.

If we define the word 'philosophy' we find that *philos* means 'to love' and *sophia* means 'wisdom' and, therefore, philosophy means the 'love of wisdom'. In India, true love and highest wisdom are one and the same, and though philosophy generally implies the idea of generalized and speculative thoughts along with reason and intellect, yet, in truth, it signifies the highest intuitive perception (*anubhuti*) of the absolute Truth. In India, we call philosophy a *darsana* and that means to see or to appreciate God, the Absolute. The word 'religion' implies the sense of a loving bond between God and man, between the Brahman and the individual soul. If we define the word 'religion' we find that *religio* means 'to bind' i.e. to bind a man with the ultimate principle which is the Absolute. Man is the highest and par-excellent object of evolution and excels all the creatures in the universe in order and in merit. The *Upanshad* says that it is man alone who can realize the Brahman and can go beyond the cycle of birth and rebirth and can break the chain of nescience (*ajñana*). The false knowledge (*mithya-jnana*) deludes us and so we shall have to shake the fetters of false knowledge by attaining right knowledge (*satya-jnana*).

The book, *Thoughts on Philosophy and Religion*, is a collection of thirteen lectures of analytical and intuitive discussions on philosophy and religion. Two appendices have been added, one Dr A. Kuenon's discussion on the worship of Jahveh in the form of a bull, and the other, Questions

and Answers These lectures were at first published in brochures in America and in India too, and thereafter those have been bunched together and published in book form

The fourteen chapters of this book cover the comparative and scientific studies on different aspects of philosophy and religion along with their practical application in human life Swami Abhedananda has discussed about unity and harmony, the cosmic evolution and its purpose, the development of Word and Cross in ancient India, philosophy of good and evil, religion of the Hindus, the Saviours of the souls, the Motherhood of God, the Divine communion, and the ways to be blessed life—all in a very comprehensive manner He has thrown new light on different theories and problems which he has taken for discussion, and has said that until and unless theories are brought into practice, so long intellectual discussions are meaningless Higher intuitive perception of the Absolute is the aim of both philosophy and religion, ११११

In the first chapter, Swami Abhedananda has discussed the main principles and problems of philosophy and religion The Swami has said that by studying all sciences, philosophies and religions of the world we find that truth is absolute and one and the manifestations of truth appear as many The aims of both philosophy and religion are to discuss about the unchangeable truth and also to discover that truth which underlies all the phenomena In fact, philosophy determines both reality and unreality of everything of the universe and instructs men to accept reality and to abandon unreality The Swami says that the work of religion is also to determine the method by which men can understand that they are the immortal Spirit and not the mortal body, and the moment they realize the nature of their being, they are able to separate the mortal body from the immortal *Atman*

The second chapter continues with the discussions on philosophy and religion In this chapter, Swami Abhedananda has efficiently discussed the central philosophical thought of Spinoza, Berkeley, Hume, Kant, Fichte Schelling, Hegel, Schopenhaur and Herbert Spencer in one hand, and the speculative thoughts of the leading philosophers of India on the other and has shown that all of them have tried to discover the unchangeable essence of the world, whether that essence

is known as the Unknown and Unknowable, the Will, the Absolute, God, or the Brahman. While comparing the system of philosophy of Kant with that of Advaita Vedanta, Swami Abhedananda says that Vedanta philosophy is loftier than the Kantian system, because Vedanta philosophy shows the phenomenal nature of the Kantian ego which Kant realized as the source of truth, and the forms of intuition and vagary of thought have been placed with phenomena. Besides, Vedanta philosophy has recognized the identity of the objective reality with the subjective reality, which Kant did not. The Swami has also refuted Herbert Spencer or the Spencerian school, because Spencer maintained that which cannot be perceived by senses and cannot be understood by intellect, will never be known. But the Swami says that the super-sensible and super-intellect Brahman can be known, i.e., be realized by the Divine intuition. In the *Adhyasa bhashya*, Sankara has admitted that the *Atman*, or the Brahman, is not altogether unknown (*avishaya*), but is known as an idea of "I" to our knowledge (*"aham pratyaya-gocharatvat"*).

Swami Abhedananda views that true philosophy performs three functions. Firstly, it corresponds with the final results, arrived at by different branches of science and taking up these results, makes the wider generalization. Secondly, it must go into the realm of the phenomenal or the knowable, and must raise the soul up from the dark abyss of selfishness, ignorance and self-delusion. Thirdly, it makes it realize its divine and absolute nature. Religion of Vedanta also teaches the alternative methods of the spiritual practices like the Karma Yoga, the Bhakti Yoga, the Raja Yoga and the Jnana Yoga and says that these are the *alternative paths* to reach the same absolute Reality. Ramakrishna Paramahansa admits this view, and has preached that all the methods of spiritual practice lead to one and the same goal.

The third chapter deals with the main principles of Vedanta philosophy and in the fourth chapter, Swami Abhedananda has discussed the universal teachings of Vedanta. He says that the secret of work, the secret of devotion, and the secret of concentration and meditation disclose the truth which lead men to one and the same Reality. Though there are three divisions in Vedanta philosophy according to the three

viewpoints or schools, yet they have come to the same conclusion regarding the final goal of the human beings

The fourth chapter deals with the sublime teachings of Vedanta philosophy. The Swami says that Vedanta philosophy teaches that religion is science of the soul and gives a scientific and philosophical basis to religion. It teaches the secrets of work (*krama*), devotion (*bhakti*), concentration (*dharana*), and meditation (*dhyana*), which disclose the mystery of the highest wisdom. The Swami further says that Vedanta philosophy is not pessimistic like Buddhism which teaches that the visible world is an illusion. Specially the Madhyamika school of Buddhism teaches that reality or existence of the world is reduced to nothingness or void (*sunyata*), but the non dualistic school of Vedanta teaches that the world is the product of nescience or *maya* and that means the world has a relative or conditional phenomenal existence (*vyavaharika satta*) and has no permanent existence (*paramarthika satta*). The real contention of the non-dualistic Vedanta philosophy is this that existence of the absolute Brahman is the only reality and other than the Brahman, everything is unreal.

The fifth chapter deals with religion of Vedanta philosophy. Swami Abhedananda deals in this chapter that religion is also included in the category of Vedanta, and of the same tree of knowledge, Vedanta philosophy is the flower and religion is the fruit. Religion of Vedanta, therefore, is unique and universal and it supplies the spiritual needs of all classes of people in all climes and all ages. The one peculiarity of religion of Vedanta is that as, on the one hand, it encourages those who do not care for any ritual, ceremonial, symbolic or any other external forms of worship, so, on the other, it provides all forms, rituals, ceremonies, and symbols for those who find them helpful at the time of devotional exercises. In fact, religion of Vedanta philosophy gives the real and inner meaning or significance of everything and says that means of attaining to supreme consciousness may be manifold, but end is one and the same, and so there remains no sectarian view regarding spiritual *sadhana*. The means, or the symbols, are the steps towards perfection, and perfection to Godconsciousness which is the real end.

The sixth chapter deals with religion of the Hindus. In

this chapter, Swami Abhedananda has historically traced the origin of the word Hindu', and has defined it in an universal way. As the Hindus are the worshippers of eternal religion (*Santana Dharma*), so their religion is universal, not being determined or limited by any caste, creed, and nationality. Religion of the Hindus does not believe in, or preach, the theory of sin or hell, but discloses the fact that all human beings are the children of the immortal bliss and they are, in essence, the changeless immortal Brahman. Religion of the Hindus recognizes the spiritual growth of the souls, and also describes different stages of spiritual development. There are men of different tastes, temperaments, and likings, and so religion of the Hindus is very liberal to prescribe different types of spiritual practice or *sadhana* that suit to different kinds of men.

The seventh chapter deals with the cosmic evolution and its purpose. In this chapter, Swami Abhedananda deals critically and comparatively with philosophy and psychology of both the *Upanishads* and the *Sankhya* with a scientific outlook. He describes first the Upanishadic process of evolution of the world-process and then the Sankhyan process of evolution from the *Prakriti*, and says that both the processes are compatible with the theory of evolution as laid down by modern science. The Swami says that after the Upanishadic interpretation of the theory of evolution (*cf* the *Taittiriya Upanishad*) the Sankhyan philosophy states that the nature of *Prakriti* "produces the environmental conditions first, and then brings out the invisible germs of life and gives them suitable forms so that each one will manifest the powers which are latent in it". Prof. Hopkins is of the opinion that even Plato and the neo-Platonists were greatly influenced by the Sankhyan thought. Before the 6th century B.C. all the religio-philosophical thoughts and ideas of Pythagoras were current in India (*cf* Prof. L. Von Schroeder *Pythagoras*). Swami Abhedananda says that if there were but one or two of these cases, they might be set aside as accidental coincidences, but such coincidences are too numerous to be the result of chance. Prof. Hopkins says that Prof. Garbe similarly is of the opinion that the views of Plotinus are in perfect agreement with those of the *Sankhya* system. Prophecy and others were also influenced by the thoughts of the *Sankhya* and the *Patanjali*. So it is found that not only the Greek thinkers,

but also almost all the thinkers of the world more or less owed their debt to the *Sankhya* and also to the Yoga psychology of Patanjali. The Swami further says that from the animal plane we are rising into the moral plane and from the moral plane to spiritual plane. The animal plane is the plane of a narrow and limited consciousness of the lower self, and when we recognize the self of others, seek their comfort, and help them, then we rise on the human plane. Here begins the moral life of a man, and the spiritual life begins with the perfection of the moral life. In the real spiritual life we recognize our immortal nature of the soul.

The eighth chapter deals with the philosophy of good and evil. In this chapter, Swami Abhedananda says that, in reality, there is neither good, nor evil, but those are relative terms. What we call good, depends upon the existence of what we call evil, and evil exists only in relation to good. Consequently, according to the Vedanta philosophers, the difference between good and evil is not one of kind, but of degree, like the difference between light and shade. The same fire may be called a giver of life and comfort as well as the cause of death and suffering. So good and evil do not exist in reality, but they exist only in our mind, or in our conception. In fact, what fulfils our interest, is called good, and which brings misery unto us, is called evil. Similarly punishment and reward are the same relative things.

The ninth chapter deals with the Word and the Cross in ancient India. While dealing with this chapter, Swami Abhedananda gives a historical account of the origin of the symbol of the Cross. The ancient Greeks had the idea of the Logos or Word and the Swami says that it was through Philo Judæa that the Greek conception of the divine Word was introduced amongst the thoughtful class of the Jews then living in Alexandria which was the prominent seat of education, culture, commerce and trade. The Jewish, Greek, Hindu, and Buddhist philosophers used to meet and interchange their ideas in Alexandria. The library of Alexandria was very famous. It is said that the theory of Logos first originated with the Greek philosopher Heraclitus who lived from 500 to 440 B.C. The Stoic philosophers also incorporated the idea of the Logos or Word, and they called it the Supreme Reason or God. But Philo always

used Logos or Word as the 'Thought of God'. The author of the Fourth Gospel identified the Logos or Word with Christ, the perfect type of man which existed in the Divine mind from the beginning, and this idea of the author of the Fourth Gospel is similar to that of the Indian thoughts to some extent. Some are of the opinion that universal meaning of the Logos or Word, as given by Philo and neo-Platonists, was the outcome of the ideas of the Hindu philosophers who lived in Alexandria and Greece about the time of Alexander the Great in 333 B.C. and their statement was supported by the writings of Eusebius, a famous historian. Eusebius stated that an Indian philosopher came to Athens and had a discussion with Socrates. It is stated that when Socrates told him that his philosophy consisted in inquiries about the life of man, the Indian philosopher smiled and replied that no one could understand things human who did not understand things divine. In this way, the Swami has shown that the Greek, Stoic neo-Platonist and other philosophers were indebted to the Indian philosophers in the remote days in their thoughts and ideas of many things.

Now it is found, Swami Abhedananda says, that the conception of the Word or Logos was rooted in the philosophical speculations of the Aryan mind who tried to bridge the gulf that exists between the visible and the invisible, between the phenomenal and the noumenal. The words, Logos, Thought, Idea and *Vak*, *Pranava* or *Omkara* are the symbols to signify the almighty God, or the Absolute. Patanjali says that the *Pranava* is *vachaka*, or the symbol. The utility of a sign, or a symbol, is to signify an object for which it is used. The indeterminate (*nirguna*) Brahman is devoid of any attribute (*veishesana*) or adjunct (*upadhi*) and so it has to be signified by a medium, possessed of an attribute or attributes and that medium is the *Pranava* (OM). This *Pranava* has been conceived as the determinate (*saguna*) Brahman, and through this medium of the determinate Brahman we realize the indeterminate Brahman which is nameless and formless. All the nations of the world have adopted symbols or *pratika* from which the word *pratima* or idol or deity has been derived or conceived, and the importance of an idol or deity is to signify the reality behind it. In ancient India, and also in



other ancient countries, we find that the sacred Svastika has been adopted as the symbol of God, or of the Absolute. It is said that the sacred Cross (and also the Tau Cross) of the Christians are derived from the Svastika of the Hindus. The Svastika is of three kinds, *Dakshinavarta* (whose arms are extended towards south or to right hand directions), *Vamavarta* (whose arms are extended to left hand direction) and *Nandyavarta* (whose arms are bent and directed towards the right side). The Hindus generally use the *Dakshinavarta* Svastika. Sometimes they use the *Vamavarta* or the *Nandyavarta* Svastika for special Vedic or Tantric uses. Some scholars are of the opinion that the Christian Cross evolved from the wooden Cross-Bar (X), to which the Saviour, Jesus the Christ was hanged and nailed. But that is not correct, as the Christian Cross evolved from the Hindu Svastika. It might be the fact that some of the Christians traditionally observed the Cross-Bar of Christ commemorate the incident of crucifixion. However, as the Svastika became the religious symbol of the Hindus and also of the Buddhist, so the Cross was the sacred symbol of the Christians and other Christian nations. The archaeologists working in prehistoric field maintain that the Svastika or the Cross (Svastika-Cross) came to the Western countries from the East during the Bronze Age. Whatever may be the controversy regarding the origin of the Word and the Cross, it is true that the signs or symbols are used in the religious practices of all nations of the world. Patanjali has described *Pranava* as the sign or symbol of the Brahman. *tasya vachakah pranava'*

It is found that the ancient Egyptians used the Tau-Cross which is like the English letter "T". In the Egyptian hieroglyphics, the Cross has been interpreted in various ways. Sometimes it (the Cross) was with four equal arms, sometimes it was composed of two or four sceptres with a circle at the point of interception. Among the Egyptian deities, Amon-Ra or Ra had the sacred Tau-Cross in his hands. Again many ancient nations borrowed that Egyptian Tau-Cross and interpreted it as the sign or symbol of goodness. It has already been said that the Hindus used Cross or Svastika as a symbol of holiness. Prof. Wilson read a paper on Svastika before the Smithsonian Institute in U.S.A. and proved that Svastika-Cross came in the Western country from India earlier than the 6th

century B C Prof Lundy has supported this view of Prof Wilson in his *Monumental Christianity* Prof Lundy quoted from Prof Colebrooke and said that the students of the Vedic literature know well that the most ancient sacrificial posts were in the form of the Cross and on such posts the First-born Being was fastened like an animal of the sacrifice This allusion is no doubt figurative, but it is historically true that the Cross of the Western country evolved from the ancient Vedic Svastika of India

The tenth chapter deals with who is the Saviour of the souls Swami Abhedananda says that the Saviours are recognised as the Divine Incarnations of God They are the men of Divine realization and so they have infinite power to rescue men from darkness of ignorance

In this chapter, the Swami has refuted with strong argument and logic the Christian notion of special creation of man It is not true that in some particular time this world was created out of nothing and the Swami says that it evolved from a primordial cause through the process of gradual evolution The theory of evolution, as advanced by Kapila and also by the seers of the *Upanishads*, has also proved that the world with its beings and materials came out from the womb of the *Prakriti* and they will again return to it

Swami Abhedananda has also refuted the idea of the fall of Adam from the Paradise and that of the vicarious atonement He says that none of the great spiritual teachers of the world taught the dogma that we are born in sin and are going to eternal perdition We are, in reality, the children of immortal Bliss and are pure and holy all the time When we are in delusion or *maya*, we think ourselves as entangled and limited, but when true knowledge of our immortal Soul dawns upon the horizon of our mind or intellect, we come to realize that we are not limited, but are free, boundless and blessed all the time The Swami further says that sin is nothing but selfishness, and when the ego-centric idea predominates in us, then selfishness covers our shining consciousness of the Self But through discrimination, (*viveka* and *vichara*), concentration, and meditation (*dharana* and *dhyana*) or through right knowledge (*yathartha-jnana*), our veil of selfishness or nescience is removed and we realize that we are the *Atman*, or the Brahman The

Swami further says that the appearance of the *Atman* as the limited ego is sometimes described as the fall of the divine Spirit for the limitation of its phenomenal existence. This appearance of the Absolute as the relative individual ego through the power of ignorance is described in the Old Testament in a crude mythological way as the fall of Adam, which is the personified pure and perfect image of God. Ignorance is the Satan. Through the influence of the indescribable magic power of *avidya* or nescience, as it is called in Vedanta, the eye of *buddhi* or understanding is overcome. Then Adam, or the divine nature, or the *Atman*, through the association of imperfect intellect or understanding, falls from the Paradise and appears as an individual ego, losing for the time being the consciousness of the Absolute. This, according to the teachings of Vedanta (Advaita Vedanta), is the spiritual meaning of the fall of man. The fallen ego will recover its absolute state and pristine glory with the help of the knowledge of the *Atman*, which is described as Christ. This is the whole secret of true Christianity. It is seen that Swami Abhedananda has divided Christianity into two categories, Christianity (which he calls Churchianity) and true Christianity. Besides, the Swami has said in many of his lectures that most of the interpreters and commentators of Christianity have missed their real aim or insight and explained it in a quite different way. The Swami is of the opinion that the teachings of true Christianity are similar to those of the *Upanishad* or Vedanta of India, and so the teachings of Christ and those of Christianity should be interpreted in the light of Vedanta.

In the eleventh chapter, the Swami has dealt with God as the Eternal Mother (*Adya-Sakti*). He has discussed about the subject from various standpoints in a comparative manner and says that as the fire and its burning power or heat are inseparable, or as water and its waves are, in reality, non-different, or as the motionless serpent and the serpent in motion are one and the same, so the absolute Being and its energy are inseparable. In truth, both the masculine and the feminine characters of personal God are one and the same, and so we call God as our *Eternal Father or Eternal Mother*.

The twelfth chapter deals with divine communion. Swami Abhedananda says that divine communion comes at first like

the reunion of two kindred spirits, united by the everlasting bond of love, but they are apparently separated by the delusive power of the forgetfulness of the Absolute. But, in truth, this reunion leads men to a still higher realization of the spiritual oneness and at the same time helps the individual soul to regain its true glorious nature.

The Swami says in this chapter that the readers of comparative history of religions know that the Eucharist is one of the oldest rites of antiquity. The Greeks called it the Eleusinian mystery. The Eleusinian mysteries, says Rev. Taylor, were the most august of all the pagan ceremonies celebrated especially by the Athenians every fifth year in honour of Ceres, the goddess of corn. The corn goddess had given us her flesh to eat, just as Bacchus, the god of wine, in like sense, had given us his blood to drink. It reminds us the offer of flesh and blood of Jesus the Christ in the Last Supper and also reminds us the ancient customs of worship of the Greek by offering of bread as Demeter (Ceres) and wine as Dionysus (Bacchus). Swami Abhedananda says that the Eleusinian mysteries were accompanied by many other religious rites and ceremonies expressive of the purity and self-denial of the worshipper, and were considered to be an expiation of past sins. The ancient Egyptians also observed annually the celebration of the resurrection of Osiris, commemorating his death in the Cross by eating bread and wine. The ancient Persians also worshipped the Mithra or Sun as their Saviour or Redeemer, taking the sacrament of bread and wine with the same belief that the Christians do today. The Swami says that all these offerings of bread and wine, or flesh and blood, remind us of the cake (*purodasa*) and wine (*soma-juice*) in the Vedic sacrifices (*yajna*). In the Vedic period, the body of the Prajapati or the first-born Lord (*Brahma*) was considered to be the symbol (*pratika*) of good will. That is, the Prajapati sacrificed himself before creation for the good of all creatures. In fact, all these instances of mythological allusions are the symbols or signs of divine communion. Through divine communion God, or the absolute Brahman, appears as nearest and dearest one to the devotees and so they get chance to commune with God, or with the Absolute, and thus their real existence (*satta*) is realized.

It should be mentioned in connection with this chapter that while discussing divine communion, Swami Abhedananda has used 'Godconsciousness' (he has used this word in many of his writings) to mean the superconscious state or *samadhi*, which is the supreme achievement of the human life. It is to note that Swami Abhedananda and Swami Vivekananda too, have often used the word 'God' to mean *Isvara* as either the third Principle, the First-born Lord of the universe or *Hiranyagarbha-Isvara*, *Brahmā*, or the second Principle of the universe, and sometimes they also have used God in the sense of the indeterminate absolute Brahman, the fourth Principle or *Turiya chaitanya*. But Swami Abhedananda has used in this chapter and in many other lectures the word Godconsciousness (or God-vision) so as to mean the absolute Brahman which transcends all categories of time, space and causation, and also transcends all adjuncts (*upadhis*). Here the Swami says that divine communion brings the attainment of Godconsciousness, in which all other consciousness are merged. He states " \* \* but Godconsciousness comes through the realization of our true nature which is eternally one with the pure, blissful and all-knowing divine Spirit" And when one attains to Godconsciousness, "all questions are solved, all doubts cease, all results of the past actions are annulled and all the knots of desire that rise in self-loving and self-seeking ignorant hearth, are torn asunder" From this it is clear that Swami Abhedananda has used 'Godconsciousness' to mean the absolute Brahman which is indeterminate (*nirguna*), immutable (*kutastha*) and transcends nescience (*maya* or *ajnana*).

The thirteenth chapter deals with the way to the blessed life. Swami Vivekananda and the German philosopher Johann Gottliel Fichte both have dealt with this subject in different ways. J. G. Fichte delivered his lectures on the *Way towards the Blessed Life* in Berlin in 1806, and Swami Vivekananda delivered his lecture on the *Way to Blessedness* in New York in 1900. Swami Abhedananda is of the opinion that after Kant, the pro-Kantian philosophers like Fichte, Schelling and Hegel were the leading philosophers in the Western world. Now, it might be the fact that Swami Abhedananda delivered his lecture on the *Way to the Blessed Life* in America being inspired by the writings of both J. G. Fichte and Swami Vivekananda,

though he has dealt with his own subject in a new and novel way. Swami Abhedananda says in this beautiful lecture that in the whole animal kingdom, man alone is capable of solving the problem of the mortal life. Our apparent earthly life is nothing but a symbol of the eternal life principle. The true life of being is Blessedness and is beyond the categories of time and space, which is known as nescience or *ajnana*. True life or being is not conditioned by any qualification or adjunct. The philosopher Fichte said that our life is itself Blessedness, and it cannot be otherwise, for life is love and the whole form and power of life consist in love and spring from love (Fichte has used love as Love, i.e. Divine Love). "Blessedness is Life and Love and Life and Love are one and the same as Blessedness." Similarly Swami Abhedananda has said "True life loves nothing but one unchangeable Reality, while the apparent life loves the changeable personality which is identified with the non-eternal form." The Swami further says that unblestness consists in the idea of separateness of the part from the Whole, and Blessedness is the Whole and is perfect. The moment we realize our relation to the Whole, we are no longer bound by any conditions of selfishness, but are free. We have come to this world to gain experience. By 'experience' we mean the manifestation of latent powers and knowledge of the results. Now when we experience and immediately become aware of that knowledge of true life which is the first thing necessary for the attainment of Blessedness, then our apparent or unblest life is changed into divine and immortal one, and when the fountain of Blessedness is once opened, all the blessed qualities flow through a man and the apparent or common man is turned or transformed into a divine and real man. Vedanta says that the blessed life is attained with the realization of the absolute Brahman which is the fountainhead of infinite existence, knowledge and bliss.

## CHAPTER XXXIII

### RELIGION, REVELATION AND GOD

*Religion, Revelation and God* is the collection of lectures on What is the New Pantheism, Pantheism and Vedanta, Ideal of Vedanta and Method of its Attainment, Vedanta and the Teachings of Christ, Gautama Buddha and His Philosophy, Religion of Vedanta, An Interpretation of Vedanta and Religion, Divine Inspiration, Revelation and God, God in Everything, and Soul and God, delivered from 1902 to 1903 before the talented American audience. Now these twelve lectures, which remained so long unpublished in the form of manuscripts, are now offered to the reading public in the book form. Three appendices, (i) 'Questions and Answers', which were made on March 28, 1921, (ii) 'Science and Religion', which was published in the *Prabuddha Bharata* in October, 1898, and (iii) 'The Motherhood of God', which was published in the *Prabuddha Bharata* in September, 1898, are also included in this book.

The first chapter deals with the subject 'What is the New Pantheism'. This lecture was delivered in America by Swami Abhedananda in reply to Mr. Joseph Cook, who gave a lecture on the subject of New Pantheism in the city of Boston, in 1902. Mr. Cook tried to prove in his lecture two main perplexing problems: (1) How can we, in any actual and complete sense, cut loose from dualism, on one hand, and fail to plunge into some form of pantheism, on the other, (2) Can the modern idea of immanence of God in nature successfully escape the charge of being pantheistic? Mr. Cook also tried to prove that Waldo Emerson, Goethe, and some other philosophers, including the celebrated poets like Wordsworth, Shelly, Keats, Tennyson, Browning, Arnold and others were pantheistic. Swami Abhedananda efficiently and intelligently gave an answer to Mr. Cook's logical and argumentative lecture. The Swami said that Mr. Joseph Cook was right to a very large extent in his arguments, because Waldo Emerson might be considered as a pantheistic. So were Goethe and most of the idealistic poets like Wordsworth, Shelly and others.

Pantheism holds that God is immanent in all things of the universe, or God can be said to be the all-pervasive presence of an immanent Spirit. Mr Cook quoted Dr Hodge, President Patton, Dr Gladden, Prof Oessor LeConte, John Fiske, Prof Cessor Detbear, Prof Cessor Tylor, Prof Cessor Schmidt of Cornwell University and others, but his lecture and arguments involved several perplexing problems which must be clarified. Mr Cook forwarded that as Mr Emerson believed in the immanence of God, so he was pantheistic. As Wordsworth, Keats, Shelly, Browning, and other poets admitted immanency of God and God's glory in nature, so they were the upholders of the theory of pantheism. But these statements should be considered with care. Swami Abhedananda says that Emerson and the poets like Wordsworth are pantheistic, but "in any event, if we accept the growing conviction of modern scientific and philosophical thoughts that God and Nature are one", and 'Man is of one substance with the Father in Heaven', then I fail to see how we are to escape the dilemma of being called to be pantheistic. And I am ready to accept as true Prof Cessor Tylor's statement that 'we have been altogether too afraid to this term pantheism'. Further the Swami says "I am not pleading for pantheism as such, nor for any other 'ism', unless it be for that form of Godconsciousness", which is affirmed by the ultimate conclusion of modern scientific research. Further, we find that our scientific men and philosophers are now going back from matter to ether, and by applying the principles of pure physics and mathematics, they at last discovered an universal ether. So, from a point of view, says Swami Abhedananda we may now infer that all physical phenomena may be traced back to the varied motions of the atoms for the source of physical phenomena. We must look to the substance of the atoms, the ether \* \* But when we come a step further back and see how the atom is constituted and what it is, then we catch a glimpse of the source of the eternal energy, from which spring two phenomena, physical and psychical—matter and mind, and at last we find that matter and mind are the two extremities of one and the same substance, God, the neutral point, which is neither matter, nor mind, but at the same time permeates the whole fields of matter and mind. And this is the rational and scientific



conception of both creation and the ultimate substance behind creation. The Swami has surveyed all the views regarding pantheism, new pantheism, idealistic pantheism together with idealism, scientific idealism, etc., and quoting the real and tangible significance of the following lines from an address of Prof. Cessor Schmidt of Cornell University, said that intuition is the masterful quality of the human soul which enables it to penetrate into the core of things and movements in advance of plodding reason. A translation of a poem, sung by an intuitive pantheistic Hindu, is quoted in the last, and this poem appeared in the pages of the *Boston Transcript*.

The second chapter deals with the subject, 'Is 'Vedānta Pantheistic'. Swami Abhedananda says that if we trace the original meaning of the word 'pantheism', we shall have to look into the Greek mythology. There we find that the ancient Greek shepherds maintained the belief in a god whom they called 'Pan'. This poetic description of the god 'Pan' is nothing but the crude and imperfect symbolization of the conception of God which the shepherds of those days had. The god 'Pan' was also the god of the hills, mountains, and rivers. However, the word Pan means 'all' and 'theism' means 'belief in a god', and, therefore, it asserts the consubstantiation of God with nature.

There are varieties of pantheism, such as *poetical aesthetic pantheism*, *doctrinal pantheism*, *realistic pantheism*, *philosophic pantheism*, *materialistic pantheism*, *scientific pantheism* and so on. (1) *Poetical aesthetic pantheism* is nothing but the worship of nature for its beauty, or for its aspects. (2) *Doctrinal pantheism* is based on the doctrine that everything in this universe is the ever-changing manifestation of God, and when we worship the objects of nature, we worship God. (3) *Realistic pantheism* is that in which the natural causes of the phenomenal world are personified and deified and worshipped. (4) *Philosophic pantheism* maintains that there is one being or substance, which is the cause of both mind and matter—thought and extension, and this being or substance is God. Spinoza believed in the doctrine of philosophic pantheism. (5) *Materialistic pantheism* holds that matter is the cause of everything. The Greek philosopher Xenophon was the first

to promulgate this doctrine Anaxagoras also believed in this doctrine (6) *Idealistic pantheism* holds that 'God is love, and whosoever dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God' The philosophers like Schlegel, Hegel and others maintained *idealistic pantheism*. The Christian mystics of the Middle Ages believed in this doctrine Goethe, Bruno and the poets like Wordsworth, Keats, Shelley, Tennyson, Byron and others were pantheists, to some extent The philosophers like Herbert Spencer, Huxley, John Fiske, Voltaire, Thompson and others were the scientific pantheists

Now it is asked as to whether Vedanta is pantheistic or not Really Vedanta does not teach the doctrine of pantheism It does not teach asthetic pantheism, because it does not support the worship of nature instead of God Vedanta does neither teach philosophic pantheism, nor realistic, idealistic, and scientific or materialistic pantheism In fact, we cannot even limit Vedanta by any kind of 'isms' like deism, monotheism, monism, etc, but it is limitless and universal Vedanta says that all differences in 'isms' are merely differences in degrees and not of kind As the conception of God in us grows higher and higher, so we pass from one 'ism' to another Vedanta says that these 'isms' are like a class in the school of religion and the individual soul is a student in that school If anyone stops in one class and spends his life there, then his progress will cease So he will have to pass the classes one after another and at last he is promoted to the highest class of religion, which is known as spiritual realization

Vedanta presents two aspects of one and the same Reality One is called the absolute Reality and other is known as the phenomenal or relative reality In fact, the one absolute Reality appears as both transcendental and phenomenal for the limiting adjunct of nescience or *maya* Vedanta is so liberal that it does not quarrel with any religious sect and belief, but it says that for ignorance we imagine a difference between one sect or belief and the other, but, in truth, there is no difference, as one absolute Reality is conceived and worshipped in various forms and various names We call the Brahman, God, Hari, Rama and others, but it should be remembered that one absolute Reality is known by different names and different personalities So Vedanta has no narrow view of limiting the one stupendous

whole Reality, as it prescribes different forms and names of one and the same Reality for different devotees or worshippers of different tastes and temperaments

The third chapter deals with the subject of 'pantheism and Vedanta' Swami Abhedananda has discussed this chapter in reference to the previous one The Swami says that 'pantheism' is a magic word which enchants and influences the mind of many untrained minds Now it is found that if a person believes that God is omnipotent and He dwells everywhere, he is called pantheistic Waldo Emerson is called pantheistic, because he believed in an all-pervading God or Deity. It is a ridiculous matter that Mrs Eddy found pantheism in anything which belonged to outside of Christian cult or theology Dr A P Hodge described pantheism as nothing but pure monism which reduces the phenomenal world into one absolute substance Now we find that pantheism, according to Dr. Hodge, is somewhat similar to that of Spinoza It has already been said that Fichte, Schelling, and others, maintained the doctrine of scientific pantheism, which uphold the view that there is one Reality which is the basis or substratum of the phenomenal universe According to Ernest Haeckel, pantheism upholds the view that there is one Reality which is the basis or substratum of the phenomenal universe According to Ernest Haeckel pantheism teaches that God and the world are one, and the idea of the Divine will is identical with the idea of God But Vedanta teaches that the Reality of the universe is beyond matter, mind, force, and energy This Reality or the absolute Brahman of Vedanta is not the same as the Substantia of Spinoza, rather it is known as *Isvara* But, according to the strict logic of Vedanta, *Isvara* is inferior to the absolute Brahman, because *Isvara* is regarded as the Creator of the world, but the absolute Brahman being raised above *maya*, does not create, but remains as witness (*saksi*) having no agency in any act of creation But Vedanta and specially Advaita Vedanta of Sankara made a room for immanency of the Brahman for the solution of the question of creation or projection (*srusti*) of the world of appearance, and has admitted the phenomenal existence (*vyavaharika-satta*) of the world, though in the final analysis, it makes the Brahman transcendent That is, Sankara admits that until and unless a person realizes the

Brahman as the only Reality and other than the Brahman, everything is unreal, so long the phenomenal existence appears as real, but it is sublated and contradicted by the transcendental Reality. Vedanta admits God, who is associated with *maya* (causal nescience), but dominates over it. *Isvara* can be said to be the all-knowing and all-intelligent cosmic ego. *Isvara* dwells in every object and gives reality or existence (*satta*) to all objects of the universe. *Isvara* can be called the universal cosmic energy of modern science. The *Upanishad* calls *Isvara*, in its essence, the Reality. But it does not mean by 'reality' the reality of name and form of a thing, but it says that name and form exist in and through the source of existence, which is known as reality or Reality. So we cannot say that Vedanta is pantheistic, because Vedanta proves that God, or the Absolute, is in everything and in all, but everything and all are not God or the Absolute.

The fourth chapter deals with the subject 'The Vedanta Philosophy'. Swami Abhedananda explains in this chapter the fundamental principles of the Vedanta philosophy, as he did in the other lectures on Vedanta. The Swami has explained that the Vedanta philosophy has disclosed the secret of various methods of religious and spiritual practices, and explained the purpose of life and the method how this purpose can be fulfilled. He divided the Vedanta philosophy into different schools and said that though different teachers of different schools forward methods of *sadhana* in some different ways, yet the goal to be attained through those methods is one and the same, and that is the attainment of Godconsciousness. The Swami says that the Vedanta philosophy is not pessimistic like Buddhism, as it does not teach that the whole universe is an 'illusion', but it teaches that *maya* means the relative or conditional phenomenal existence, which is annulled or sublated by the permanent existence. The permanent existence is the transcendental absolute Reality, which is not limited by the categories of time, space and causation.

The Swami writes that the Vedanta philosophy is not confined to any particular book or scripture, but it embraces all the scriptures of the world as well as disclose the central and ultimate truth of all scriptures. It is neither built around any particular person, nor is the collection of special revelations,

Moreover it gives a rational explanation of the moral, and spiritual laws that govern the destiny of each individual soul.

The fifth lecture deals with the subject "Ideal of Vedanta and How to attain It" Swami Abhedananda says that the ideal of Vedanta is to open our eyes to the eternal absolute truth, to realize this truth or reality and to live in this world of nescience without being overcome by *maya*

It should be remembered that we take refuge under the shade of Vedanta to learn the tricks of escaping from the snare of indefinable *maya* and also to get into the core of truth that makes us free from the fetters of false knowledge and helps us to recognize our immortal heritage. The Swami has described the pitiable condition of the chained men of the world. He said that we are sleeping unconsciously the sleep of self-delusion. The whole humanity is also madly pursuing the phantoms of hope which change their colour as we come nearer, and then after a moment they appear at a distance with new brilliance and fresh colours which attract our attention again and again, and drag us headlong in that aimless pursuit. So we shall have to wake from the sleep for realizing the nature of this self-deceptive delusion and at the same time for realizing the nature of the *Atman* that transcends the limit of nescience and shines all the time in its own undying glory. The Swami makes a remark that for realizing the immortal *Atman* we shall have to hear constantly and repeatedly and over and over again that our *Atman* is divine and to think of it day after day and night after night, and let each of our nerves and brain-cells pulsate with the idea that we are divine, immortal and one with the Supreme, and then concentrate our thoughts and meditate upon the Supreme, which will confer upon us the boon of Immortality.

The sixth chapter deals with the subject, "Vedanta and the Teachings of Christ". Swami Abhedananda begins this lecture with the message of the *Bhagavad Gita* that God Himself reincarnates for the welfare of the human society when necessity arises. He recognises Rama, Buddha, Krishna, Christ, Chaitanya, Ramakrishna as the divine Incarnations. The Swami says that when the great Incarnations of God use the word 'I', 'Me' and 'Mine', they never think of themselves as the human beings, but always mean the higher spirit of the

**Divine Self** In the *Gita*, we find that while inspiring Arjuna in the battle field of Kuruksetra, Śrī Kṛṣṇa said to his friend and disciple Arjuna "*surva-dharman paritajya mamekam sharanam vraja, aham tam sarva-papebhyah mokṣayayami ma shuachah*", i.e. giving up all the formalities of religion, come unto me, follow me, take refuge in me, worship me, and I shall give the rest and make thee free from sins, grieve not, (XVIII 66) Christ also said to his disciples "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I shall give you rest" Thus we find both Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Christ have used the words 'I', 'Me', and 'Mine' (*aham, mayi, mam, mamekam*, etc.) in their sayings, and it should be remembered that both of them, being the divine Incarnations of God, used those words in a God-absorbing feeling or spirit (i.e. being *atmasta*), and Śrī Kṛṣṇa meant that Arjuna should dedicate his individual will to the cosmic will of the Lord with his single-hearted devotion Christ also meant so Now from this it is understood that until and unless a man entirely forgets his selfish idea, so long help from the Almighty will not come unto him The Vedānta philosophy teaches us the same truth Vedānta also says to remove the darkness of vanity and selfishness from our mind, because vanity and selfishness are no other than *avidyā* The nature of *avidyā* or ignorance is to cover and that of *vidyā* or knowledge is to recover or unfold So the Vedānta philosophy and also all the Prophets and Incarnations instruct all to go beyond the egoistic idea so as to receive the self-revealing flash of the Divine knowledge or consciousness

The ideal of the sublime teachings of both Vedānta and Christ is not to go to heaven and to enjoy the pleasures of life, but to enjoy freedom, i.e., freedom from the bondage of ignorance or *avidyā* The Divine Being, or the *Atman*, dwells in each minutest atom as well as in the largest solar system He dwells in the hearts of all beings, so we should take refuge in Him, and should remove the idea of separateness from Him, so as to realize that I and my Father are one

The seventh chapter deals with the subject 'Gautama Buddha and His Philosophy' This lecture is divided into four sub-headings (i) Is Buddha indebted to Kapila, (ii) Gautama Buddha's Philosophy, (iii) Mavavada of Buddha, and (iv) What is Pratityasamutpada This chapter beautifully deals with an

around his dynamic and ennobling personality and also around his sublime thoughts and teachings and dialogues. Buddha's disciples followed the path of Buddha, but afterwards they were divided into various sects for their different customs and creeds and religious beliefs.

Swami Abhedananda says that if we critically study the philosophy of Buddha, we find that some of the principal thoughts and ideas differ from those of Kapila, the promulgator of the *Sankhya* system. Buddha said that the manifestation of the universe is a mere non existence or illusion, and, therefore, there is no principle like *Praṁkṛiti*. But Kapila admitted the existence and importance of the *Praṁkṛiti* and said that the universe evolved from the contact of the *Praṁkṛiti* with the *Puruṣa*, and the universe vanishes when the *Praṁkṛiti* dissociates her contact with the *Puruṣa*. Buddha also denied the existence of the attributeless *Puruṣa*.

Swami Abhedananda has shown some similar ideas that exist in both the *Sankhya* of Kapila and the *Madhyamika-vṛitti* of Nagarjuna. The Swami says that both these systems agree in the following points, to some extent.

- I The substance or the *Praṁkṛiti* and the *gunas* or the attributes are different
- II Cause and effect are identical,
- III Time and space (*deśa* and *kāla*) are the forms of our thoughts or knowledge,
- IV There is no existence of God, the Creator,
- V Being the source of contradictory facts, the Vedas are not valid and genuine

Buddha and Jaimini denied the existence of God and also the authority of the Vedas. Kapila also denied God, though Patanjali afterwards modified that idea. The Swami has discussed comparatively the process of evolution in both the systems of Kapila and of the Buddhists, along with the ingredients like *sādindriya*, *skandha*, *vedāna*, *ulīnana*, *saṁjña*, and *samskāra* (of the Buddhists) and *buddhi*, *ahamkāra*, *tanmātra*, and *indriya*, etc. (of Kapila). The Swami says that ultimate goal of both the systems is one and the same. But, from the critical study of both the systems it is found that Buddha himself and the later Buddhist borrowed many things in their philosophy from the *Sankhya* philosophy of Kapila. As for example, the

term 'Bodhisattva' is connected with the *sattva* quality of the *Sankhya*, and the particle *bodhi* is derived from *buddhi* (of the *Samkhya*) Therefore *sambodhi* in the *Prajnaparamita* has been used in the feminine gender, corresponding to the gender of *buddhi* (of Kapila) Further the particle *tanmatra* of the *Sankhya* corresponds to *tathata* of the Buddhists Some scholars are of the opinion that the Buddhists borrowed the word Nibbana (Nirvana) from the word Brahmanirvana of Advaita Vedanta Swami Abhedananda has also discussed about Nirvana, as has been used by Buddha himself and his followers

Regarding Gautama Buddha's philosophy, Swami Abhedananda says that Buddha taught his disciples to look to the world from four different standpoints, which were known as 'chatvari dharma padani' or the four facts of virtue, and they are

- I *Antyah sarva-samskarah,*
- II *Dukhah sarva-samskarah,*
- III *Nairatmah sarva samskarah,*
- IV *Santam nirvanam cheti*

Now, it is said that from the four facts of virtue or *dharma*, there evolved four different schools of the Buddhist thought, known as, Madhyamika, Yogachara, Sautiantika, and Vaibhasika Swami Abhedananda has explained the viewpoints and doctrines of these four schools comparing the two existences of the Madhyamika school with those of the Advaita school of Vedanta, as explained by Sankara, and has explained *sunyata* as suchness or thatness, which signifies a positive fact of feeling of nothingness, and that is supported by the statement '*aham sunyam*' (I am nothingness itself) like the Vedantic statement '*aham brahmasmi*' (I am the Brahman) The *Prajnaparamita* explains this state of *sunyata* or nothingness as an inconceivable thing beyond all relativity of existence and non existence, which is neither a combination of the two, nor a negation of the two

In the discussion on the 'Mayavada of Buddha, Swami Abhedananda quotes from the Buddhist scripture the statement "*dharmataisa sarva-dharmanam maya-dharmatamupadaya*", i.e. the objects that are said to exist, are mere illusion or *maya* Buddha compared this *maya* with the false work of a magician So this *maya* is known as *avidya* or *samvriti*



While discussing about the theory of *pratityasamutpada*, Swami Abhedananda says that this term connotes the idea of 'dependent origination'. The Swami has explained twelve stages of this process of dependent origination, and it should be noticed that on each stage other stages depend. As for example, on *avidya* or ignorance *samskara* depends, on *samskara*, *vyana* depends, and so on. These twelve stages are known as twelve *pratyayas*. Nagarjuna explained four main *pratyayas* which are *hetu*, *alambana*, *samantara* or *anantara* and *adhipati*. The Swami has discussed about two traditions of the Buddhists which are casually divided. The *pratyayas* have six *hetus* and five *phalas*, and these have been shown with a chart.

The eighth chapter deals with the subject 'Religion of Vedanta'. Swami Abhedananda says that religion of Vedanta is universal and strongly comforting to those who have outgrown dogmas and creeds of special and sectarian religions. The special characteristic of Vedantic religion is that it can harmonize the ultimate conclusions of both science and philosophy. In fact, religion means a knowledge of the absolute Being or Godhead and also the attainment of God-consciousness. It is being and becoming one with the Divine realization of oneness of the individual soul with the supreme Spirit. This is the meaning of the word 'religion of Vedanta'. Immanuel Kant tried to harmonize his philosophical system with that of religion, but met with a sad failure in the end. He forwarded three great ideas of religion like personal God, free will, and immortal soul, so as to harmonize philosophy with religion, but he failed, and the result was that he became as dogmatic as a Catholic priest. But when he tried to bring his philosophy down to the plane of ethics, he had to assume something. Similarly Herbert Spencer failed to make his philosophy a religious one. Ernest Hæckel and other scientists also tried to build an ethical and utilitarian ideal, but they were also failure to do so, because they denied the existence of God, an individual soul, and its freedom and immortal nature. The Christian theology also threw aside philosophy and science and, consequently, rejected the universal outlook of religion, as it was built on the authority of a book only. The New Thought Movement was successful to

harmonize religion with philosophy to a certain extent, but was called the American religion of Vedanta and not true type of Vedantic religion. Such was the deplorable conditions of the Christian Scientists and the Mental Healers of America. But, in India, we find that religion of Vedanta is very rational and scientific and it harmonizes with the fundamental principles of both science and philosophy.

The ninth chapter deals with the subject 'An Interpretation of Vedanta and Religion'. So to say, this subject is no other than a reply to Mr. Dresser's article on 'Vedanta' which was published in the *Arena*, in October, 1900. Swami Abhedananda says "After reading Mr. Dresser's article \* \* I feel it my duty \* \* to say a few words, with the Editors permission on the same subject. I also write to correct some of Mr. Dresser's misinterpretations of Vedanta for the benefit of the many American students \* \*" The Swami has refuted those views of Mr. Dresser so as to represent the correct interpretation of the doctrine of Vedanta.

I Vedanta and religion harmonize the thoughts and ideas of all the scriptures of the world.

II The word *maya* does not mean illusion, as it means a conditional or relative or phenomenal existence (*vyavaharikasatta*). *Maya* is also known as the creative energy that helps the Brahman to create or project the world appearance.

III The Infinite or the Brahman is not finite in any time, though it assumes the form of the world and its beings through *maya*, but this assumption is not real.

IV There is no degree of reality of *maya*, as *maya* has no reality of its own.

V Vedanta never teaches birth and death of the *Atman*, as the *Atman* is birthless and deathless and immortal all through eternity.

VI Vedanta never teaches pessimistic and fatalistic doctrines.

In this way, Swami Abhedananda has refuted many views on Vedanta subscribed by Mr. Dresser, and says that Mr. Dresser absolutely failed to grasp the meaning of Advaita Vedanta, and though he grasped, to a certain extent, the philosophical ideas of Ramanuja, yet his interpretation on philosophy of Ramanuja was defective in many places.

The tenth chapter deals with 'Divine Inspiration, Revelation and God'. Swami Abhedananda says that when the senses are withdrawn from the external objects and beauties and are concentrated on the *Atman*, when the senses are made silent and mind and intellect are quietened, the Lord, the *Atman*, comes and pays us a visit. The silence of the senses, mind and intellect is the only condition, in which we receive divine inspiration. But this silence does not come until we have gone through many intermediate stages of evolution. These stages are indicated by the struggles of our mind and intellect, and these struggles are only the outward signs of the progress of the soul. It should be remembered, the Swami says, the progress of the soul comes from within, and it is the gradual unfoldment of the latent powers and wisdom. In fact, mental and intellectual evolutions bring out the powers and wisdom of the soul.

What do we mean by 'inspiration'? Inspiration is nothing but the lessons which we receive directly from the Divine Being. The river of knowledge is constantly flowing in our soul and if we wish to drink water of that river of knowledge, we shall have to make the senses and mind silent and have to go deep into the core of knowledge. Swami Abhedananda says 'It is in silence that God (the Absolute) speaks within us. In that state, the higher soul, the *Atman*, reveals its true nature and the veil that covered its face, is lifted up. That is the meaning of 'revelation' or 'flash of divine knowledge'." Like inspiration, revelation comes from within, i.e. from the depth of our innermost soul, so revelation is also known as divine inspiration. When revelation or divine inspiration comes or dawns upon the horizon of intellect, all questions are solved, all doubts are thrown aside, and God reveals His real nature to him. So inspiration or revelation is the ground where God descends and reveals His real nature or essence. The ordinary mortals cannot get that divine revelation, as they do not prepare the ground of their mind or intellect through spiritual *sadhana*, and so they prove themselves as the false teachers. Swami Abhedananda says that without spiritual *sadhana*, or practice, a man cannot get that divine inspiration or revelation, and revelation is the only guarantee for taking a pure and spiritual man to the

sanctuary of God the Absolute

The eleventh chapter deals with the subject 'God is in Everything'. Swami Abhedananda says that wherever we go, we carry the world with us. The world is the manifestation of our mind and we create the world according to desires of our mind. So when we go beyond the limit of our mind and purify our mind, when we will see that everything of this world is pervaded by God (*Ishvara*). Now, what do we mean by purification of the mind? Purification signifies the idea of reducing the mind into consciousness. If we concentrate the mind and reduce hundreds and thousands of modification (*vruttis*) into one consciousness, then that shining consciousness will reveal truth that God is everything and God is in everything of the world and without God the world bears no meaning and existence. It is well-known to everyone that the *Isha-Upanishad* has proved it without any shadow of doubt that God the Absolute pervades every atom and molecule of the world ("*Isha-vasyam idam sarvam yat kincha jagatyam jagat*") and God is the support and fountain-head of everything of the material, mental and spiritual world.

Swami Abhedananda has disclosed a secret of life which is the disinterested love and work for all. To seek interest means to get the result (*phala*) of the work (*karma*) done, and the *Bhagavad Gita* says that he, who desires return for work, is destined to death, so it will be wise to do work with the spirit of service to God, because the spirit of service to God makes a man free from selfishness and ego-centric idea and, consequently, purifies the mind to receive the ever-shining light of divine inspiration of God and also to realize the immortal *Atman*.

In conclusion, Swami Abhedananda says "Being the children of the Emperor of the universe, how can we dare to live like a beggar?" There run some lines of a Bengali song '*ami sāmānaya to nai, rāja putra hai, pitā dhane more purṇa adhikār*', i.e. I am not so little a man, but am the son of the king of the universe, and so, being the son, I have full right over the property of the Father'. Really divine realization is our birth-right and we feel ourselves weak and poor and ignorant only for the non-knowledge of God the Absolute. So it requires only to remove the ignorance or *avidya* from us, and then Divine God, or the Brahman, will be revealed unto us.

The *Upanishad* says "He who sees God in everything and everything in God, is a Yogi"

The twelfth chapter deals with "Soul and God. In this chapter, Swami Abhedananda has selected two main principles, soul and God. The gross phenomenal knowledge gives us an idea of difference between the individual souls (*jivatman*) and God (*paramatman*), and says that God the Creator is far superior to the individual soul. But Vedanta, and specially Advaita Vedanta, discloses the truth that the individual soul is no other than the absolute Brahman (*jivo brahmanya naparah*) and we think that the soul is different from God only for the cause of nescience or *avidya*.

The Swami says that it will be wise of every man to find out his relation to God or Absolute, because the process of finding out a relation between the soul and God is no other than a method of discrimination (*vichara*) between the real and the unreal, and when the individual soul comes to know by this mental or intellectual process that God the Absolute is the only reality, and other than It everything is unreal and impermanent, then he concentrates and meditates upon God or Absolute and realizes at last his non-difference from Him, and says "I am the absolute Brahman, and everything which seems to be different from the Absolute, is, in reality, the Brahman, and nothing in this vast universe, from the minutes germ of life to the gigantic solar system, is different from the Brahman. There are many materialists who deny God and deny even the existence of the soul, but it is an undeniable fact that they cannot deny the existence of their own self. Vedanta says that as they cannot deny the existence of their own self, so it is proved that there is something permanent which cannot be denied and that permanent lasting something is the *Atman* or Brahman, and is the support and inner essence of all the living beings. Abhedananda explains beautifully the positions and viewpoints of the upholders of different systems of religious faith and says that Paths to God only differ, but God, the goal, remains the same. Men may approach to God, or to the Absolute, through the paths of knowledge (*Jnana-Yoga*), or through devotion and love (*Bhakti Yoga*), or work (*Karma Yoga*) or through concentration and meditation (*Raja Yoga*), but, in the end, they reach one and the same goal,

God or the Absolute The Rîg Veda also says "The Truth is one, but men call it in different names and ways—*ekam sad vipra vahudha vadanti*" Swami Abhedananda says "The *Atman* within us is the source of the supreme light, and the ego contains the reflection of that light \* \* One dwells in the cave of the heart, and the other on the summit of the heart The one is the witness (*saksi*) and the other is the individual ego who enjoys the reward of his own work (*bhoktā*) We may call the one, the light, and the other, the reflection, or image, or shadow' It is a fact that a reflection cannot stand without the thing to which the reflection belongs, or a shadow or an image cannot stay without the thing behind the shadow or image So whenever we will discover that we are the reflection of God or Absolute, then we will realize that God or Absolute exists not being apart from us So, as soon as *prativimba* will be determined, the *vimbab*, God, or the absolute Brahman, will automatically be determined as an ever-related thing or essence of the individual souls Freedom must be attained by every man and woman, and freedom from the chain of delusion (*maya*) means to attain to absolute Brahman

Three lectures, Questions and Answers, Science and Religion, and The Motherhood of God, have been appended in the last portion of the book The Questions were asked on different subjects and the Swami has given their answers in a very beautiful way In the second appendix, Science and Religion, the Swami has shown a harmony between them He says that the conclusion of rational religion is in full accord with that of modern science In the third appendix, Motherhood of God, the Swami says that God is both the Father and the Mother In India, God is conceived as the Divine Mother or Sakti and She is the eternal Divine companion of God, the Creator The Swami has also refuted the Christian idea of extra-cosmic God, who sits on the throne in the heaven, and says that God is both extra-cosmic and intra-cosmic, God is both transcendent and immanent

## CHAPTER XXXIV

### SONGS DIVINE

*Songs Divine* is the English translation of the *Stotraratnākara*, an anthology of Sanskrit hymns composed by the revered Swami Abhedananda in his early youth. These hymns are addressed to Sri Ramakrishna and Sri Sarada Devi. These English translations of Sanskrit hymns have been collected together and appeared in book form.

The origin of these Sanskrit *Stotras* needs particular mention. In addition to a natural poetic grace, richness of words and an easy-flowing rhythm these hymns have an inner significance of their own. They are the spontaneous outpourings of a holy heart where Divinity was enshrined. There is also, in these verses, the firm imprint of the Swami Abhedananda's great intellectual powers and outstanding scholarship.

Early in his youth when Swami Abhedananda was under the spiritual training of his blessed Master Sri Ramakrishna at the hermitage of Dakshineswar, he had an ecstatic spiritual vision (*samadhi*). In that vision the Swami saw that he was within a large luminous hall where Ramachandra, Sri Krishna, Buddha, Christ, Mohammed, Sankara, Sri Chaitanya and other prophets and Divine incarnations were seated. In the centre of that hall was seen Sri Ramakrishna standing as an effulgent figure of immense height. Shortly afterwards, the prophets and incarnations got up one by one. As they came close to Sri Ramakrishna, each of them seemed to mingle and become one with him. This realization afterwards inspired the Swami to compose the *Sri Ramakrishna-Avatar Stotram*, showing therein that all the incarnations and prophets of old were Sri Ramakrishnas previous appearances on this earth.

Later on, when after the passing away of his Master, Swami Abhedananda was engaged in severe austerity with his brother-disciples at the monastery in Baranagar in the year 1886, he composed along with other hymns to Sri Ramakrishna-*Stavaraja*. This is the first hymn to Sri Ramakrishna, and it used to be sung at that time every evening as the *Aratrika*

song of Sri Ramakrishna at Baranagar Math

It was the intense desire of the revered Swami to present an English version of his original Sanskrit hymns to the devoted reading public. But to our misfortune the Swami did not remain any longer on this earth to see that desire of his fulfilled. Now after a long time we have been able to publish this book. Sri P. Seshadri Aiyer, B.A., M.L., the Superintendent in the Department of Publications, in the University of Travancore, gladly complied with our request to translate all the Sanskrit hymns of the Swami into English. And thus he did so quickly and successfully that we feel that our object of bringing the message of the Swami to a wide public will be fulfilled.

Swami Abhedananda had translated some of the *mantras*, hymns, verses, and prayers from the Vedas and from the Upanishads, and they also have been incorporated in this book. The Swami himself translated two of the *Stotras* and they appear at the beginning of the book. These two were at first printed and published by Sister Shivanī, an American disciple of the Swami, residing at Abhedananda Acres, Los Angeles, California, U.S.A. Afterwards they were printed in the *Prabuddha Bharata* in 1932.

It has already been said that when Sri Ramakrishna left this world, the *Sannyasins* who belonged to his order settled down in a quiet spot in Baranagore near Calcutta, and spent some years in prayerful seclusion. During that period, beginning with the year 1886, Swami Abhedananda, the great disciple, composed some religious odes dedicated to his Master, and to Sri Sarada Devi. These odes, or *Stotras*, reveal the inner passage of Sri Ramakrishna's life and teaching, while the intense glow of devotion can be felt in each line of verse giving the poems the full value of experienced reality.

A specimen of the *Stotra* of Sri Ramakrishna, with the Swami's handwriting (in Bengali) is given here.



• অম্বা-শীমদ-বাম-কৃষ্ণ-চেতন-স্বাভাৱ-  
 বৈভাৱ-ভাসবিসংস্কৃত-কথা-হি বৈভাৱ-  
 মোহ-মতো-ভ্রমসি-বৰ্জসি-দীৰ্ঘ-কাল-।  
 বিস্ময়-মিচ্ছসি-যদি-হ্যানিসং-সুখ-মোহো-  
 মন্ত্ৰ-ম-ম-মুতি-ইব-ভদ্র-বাম-কৃষ্ণ-৥১৥

দূৰ্বাব-মোহ-ভব-দাব-দিদ-হ্য-মানসা,  
 ধৰ্ম-ম্য-ল-মালিন-বাম-নাম-সুখ-মোহো-।  
 নীচ-ম্য-ল-বাম-মোহো-যদি-ম্য-ল-কাম-।  
 মন্ত্ৰ-ম-ম-মুতি-ইব-ভদ্র-বাম-কৃষ্ণ-৥২৥

ম্য-ল-ম-ম-মুখ-কাম-হি-ভব-মুখ-ভিঃ,  
 দূৰ্বাব-মোহ-ভব-দাব-দিদ-হ্য-মানসা,  
 মিচ্ছ-ম-ম-ম-মুখ-কাম-হি-ভব-মুখ-ভিঃ,  
 মন্ত্ৰ-ম-ম-মুতি-ইব-ভদ্র-বাম-কৃষ্ণ-৥৩৥

শ্রী-কাম-নাম-দি-ম-ম-যদি-ভব-মুখ-ভিঃ,  
 দূৰ্বাব-মোহ-ভব-দাব-দিদ-হ্য-মানসা,  
 মিচ্ছ-ম-ম-ম-মুখ-কাম-হি-ভব-মুখ-ভিঃ,  
 মন্ত্ৰ-ম-ম-মুতি-ইব-ভদ্র-বাম-কৃষ্ণ-৥৪৥

ভাৰ্য্য-ম-ম-ম-মুখ-কাম-হি-ভব-মুখ-ভিঃ,  
 যোষা-ক-কাম-বাম-ম-ম-মুখ-কাম-হি-ভব-মুখ-ভিঃ,  
 দূৰ্বাব-মোহ-ভব-দাব-দিদ-হ্য-মানসা,  
 মিচ্ছ-ম-ম-ম-মুখ-কাম-হি-ভব-মুখ-ভিঃ,

মং সূর্য্য ষাটু নিচয়ন স্বাবিকামিতাং,  
মং সূর্য্যবিশীন ইবং সূর্য্য-বিকৃতাকুলিষট।  
মং সূর্য্য ওবেদ্ধদ্বাদিদিদ্বিহুতি সূর্য্য,  
মং সূর্য্য সূর্য্যমহা ওদ্ব-বামসূর্য্য ১৬

সূর্য্য: সূর্য্যমহিহ মদ্বিমলং সূর্য্য,  
নি: সূর্য্যমিত্যতিসূর্য্য কামিতং সূর্য্যবৈ:।  
তং সূর্য্যমিচ্ছামি যদি সূর্য্যমদ্বিচিওস,  
সূর্য্যমিত্যতিসূর্য্যমহা ওদ্ব-বামসূর্য্য ১৭

সূর্য্যমহিহ মদ্বিমহি কামিতং সূর্য্যমহিহ,  
সূর্য্যমহিহ মদ্বিমহি নচ হেতু সূর্য্য:।  
সূর্য্য-সূর্য্যমহিহ কামিতং নহি সূর্য্য-সূর্য্য,  
তং সূর্য্যমিচ্ছামি যদি সূর্য্যমদ্বিচিওস, ওদ্ব-বামসূর্য্য ১৮

সূর্য্যমহিহ মদ্বিমহি কামিতং সূর্য্যমহিহ,  
সূর্য্যমহিহ মদ্বিমহি ওদ্ব-বামসূর্য্য ১৯  
সূর্য্যমহিহ মদ্বিমহি কামিতং সূর্য্যমহিহ,  
সূর্য্যমহিহ মদ্বিমহি ওদ্ব-বামসূর্য্য ২০

সূর্য্যমহিহ মদ্বিমহি কামিতং সূর্য্যমহিহ,  
সূর্য্যমহিহ মদ্বিমহি ওদ্ব-বামসূর্য্য ২১  
সূর্য্যমহিহ মদ্বিমহি কামিতং সূর্য্যমহিহ,  
সূর্য্যমহিহ মদ্বিমহি ওদ্ব-বামসূর্য্য ২২

ଆମେକ- ମାରିନ ମାତେ: ୨୦ ମାର୍ଚ୍ଚ ୧୯୫୫

ଅନ୍ଧା-ଧୁମ୍ଭ ଓବାତି ଚିତ୍ର-ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦେଶନେନ ।

ପାଦଶିଳ୍ପିଃ ସୁଧକାମତ୍ୟ ସୁଧାମାତ୍ରେତ,

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥

नाकाश्वर हि-भूकृष्ण-भूकृष्ण-अतीत

हृष्टी-शिवार्क-रमणी-रमणी-प्रतीति

ପ୍ରତ୍ୟାସିଦ୍ଧ-୧ ମୂଲ୍ୟାଙ୍କନ ଦ୍ଵିତୀୟାଂଶ

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ २ ॥

ਗੁਰੂ ਤੇਗ ਬਹਾਦਰ ਦੇ ਦੋਹਰੇ ਵਿਚ ਗੁਰੂ ਤੇਗ ਬਹਾਦਰ,

আবীত বদ-ই হ-খ: প্রতিদান বিত্ত:

ନାଶିତ ତତ୍ର ୧୫ ଧ: ସୁଲକ୍ଷଣ-ବିଭାଗ

७२ त्रु विरिद मरिदा त्रु मरिद ॥३०

निर्वाणमनोहसि मत्तं सर्वमध्यासी-

निष्कर्षः - दशम-सूत्रम् अथ यन्त्रवर्णनम्।

নিচুঃ মাল্যমাগ্নি তং মততঃ পবিত্রঃ

শ্রী: শিবস্বামী-বাবুজি মহোদয়-এক-বার-আম-কে-বলেন:

৩৬: নদা-সাবিতা-নিদা-আর্ষদে-ই

ਸਮਾਜ ਸੇਵਾ ਕਮੇਟੀ: ਸ਼੍ਰੀਮਤੀ ਸੁਖਮਤੀ

শ্রীমদ্ভগবদ্গীতা

৩. মুর্শীদাবাদ জেলা - ৬৮ নং থানাঃ ৥

শান্তিঃ শিবোতি শিব-ইতি নামকৃতঃ

সুপ্রভাত্যং ২৩ বিষ্ণু ব্রহ্ম বিষ্ণু



(English Translation)

## THE NECTAR OF

### SRI RAMAKRISHNA'S LAUDATIONS

- 1 O poor deluded man, why cling to pleasures?  
Stupified, you reel on life's path long  
Seek you perpetual calm in seas of bliss?  
Adore Ramakrishna's Queller of life's miseries
- 2 Consumed by life's dread, irresistible flames,  
On low instincts you move in search of weal  
To ignoble objects, Why? if rest is sought,  
Adore Ramakrishna, Queller of life's miseries
- 3 Why heed you *Shastras*, not with Self as theme,  
Sophistries' tissues, negations of words  
Of the Teacher, with no conclusions sound?  
Give them up, dullard and adore  
Sri Ramakrishna, Queller of doubts and delusions
- 4, Addicted if you lust and gold for ever,  
Never shall you thirst for these by any means be  
quenched  
Knowing them fetters, cause of worldly life,  
Adore Ramakrishna, renouncer of gold and lusts
- 5 His wife, endowed with virtues and devotion,  
And other women, slaves to *Kama's* rule  
As mother revered He, the conqueror of lust  
Him Ramakrishna, adore, free from taint of sin
- 6 The touch of metal shook His gentle frame,  
He fainted, as it were, His fingers cramped,  
His senses ceased to function, He was petrified  
Him, renunciation's Lord adore
- 7 The cream of Love, spotless and fair,  
Selfless as the wise declare,  
This, would you have? adore the Lord Ramakrishna,  
Who melts devotee's heart, with noble Love
- 8 Love of mother, father or of brother,  
Is not selfless, the Love peerless,

- And motiveless, if you seek, adore  
 Sri Ramakrishna the very sea of Love
- 9 As a loving woman enraptured in  
 The presence of her lord, whose parting her  
 Depresses, So Ramakrishna to His devotees,  
 A veritable Lover, Him adore
- 10 Ardours of devotion, tortured by rigours,  
 He purifies with helpful speech and sympathy's  
 gestures,  
 Daily are seekers of life's end consoled,  
 Adore Ramakrishna, Giver of Freedom and Law
- 11 The fruits of Yogas and endeavours,  
 The bliss of mind's control,  
 Worship of His feet confers,  
 Adore Ramakrishna, Yields of Peace and Bliss
- 12 Every man as Narayana He sees,  
 Every woman as world's divine Mother,  
 So, though Lord of all He serves the world,  
 Adore Him, Ramakrishna, free from narrow pride
- 13 Not versed in *Shastras*, He does know them all,  
 Untaught in Vedas, whose essence He knows,  
 Never learned he Tantras, yet a Law-giver—  
 To Gaulas, adore Ramakrishna, the Teacher of Truth
- 14 Rid of desires, yet ever seeking others' good,  
 Freed from action's bonds, yet ev'r serving all,  
 Untouched by sorrow's strokes, yet sharing ills—  
 Of others, behold Him, Ramakrishna, adore
- 15 Ever attended by disciples loving,  
 Singing, smiling, with Lord's words pleasing,  
 Moon-like, star-attended, bearing brilliance,  
 Him adore, Ramakrishna, Giver of heavenly Peace
- 16 Saktas deem Him Sakti, Saivas, Lord Siva  
 The best of Vaishnavas Sri Krishna's Avatara,  
 The wise call Him Jnani, Paramahansa,  
 Him, behold! Ramakrishna, and adore
- 17 Born in many wombs and in many forms,  
 In wealth, lust, enjoyments, found no joy  
 Ever the friend of the meek I know Thee  
 The giver of Peace and Joy, averse to all,  
 I pray for strong devotion to Thy feet,

- 18 Accept me, Lord, sense-mad, petty of mind,  
 Shield me falling into depths of grief,  
 Rains of mercy pour on my parched life,  
 Supreme detachment give and discretion
- 19 With high devotion who adores the Lord  
 Ramakrishna, destroyer of delusion,  
 Doubtless is freed from life's nets at once \*

Besides, the *Avatār-Stotram* reveals the most remarkable combination of dignity of style, loftiness of conception, and force of appeal. Not a little of its obvious charm is due to the consummate adaptation of style and metre to ideas. Its refrain has a haunting music of its own. The concluding hymn to the Mother Sri Sarada Devi-Stotram stands in a class by itself, both on account of its theme and treatment. The love and devotion which have historically been evoked in the heart of the Hindu devotees by the Mother concept of God, find their most melodious and moving expression in place of superb charm and abandon. The identification in the mind of the poet of the Mother of the universe with Sri Sarada Devi is complete, and the sentiments flowing from it are true, deep, and spontaneous.

On the whole it can confidently be asserted that this bouquet of hymns to Sri Ramakrishna and Sri Sarada Devi is the lovely offering of the deepest loyalty and love of the author to his spiritual parents. Swami Abhedananda is the poetic exponent of the beauty of Sri Ramakrishna's Divine Life.

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\* Translated into English by Late P. Sasadri Aiyre, Madras

## CHAPTER XXXV

### ABHEDANANDA IN INDIA IN 1906

(LECTURES AND ADDRESSES)

Swami Abhedananda returned to India, his motherland, once in 1906, after a hard toil of ten years in the West. For seven months he made an extensive tour throughout India, from Colombo to Calcutta and from Calcutta to Bombay. During his journey he was greeted by the people at every step. Everywhere the people accorded him the heartiest welcome and spontaneous receptions. No other Indian except Swami Vivekananda, received such a high honour from the people. The description of his tour, the addresses of welcome presented to him, and his lectures in reply to them, first appeared in the columns of the various newspapers, such as, *the Hindu*, *The Mysore Standard*, *The Indian Mirror*, *The Bombay Chronicle*, *The Brahman*, *The Prabuddha Bharat*, and several others.

Swami Abhedananda appeared before the public, for the first time, as a speaker, in 1896. Prior to that he was an unknown Hindu Sannyasin who travelled throughout the length and breadth of Hindustan from the Himalayas down to Rameswaram and from Jagannath to Dwaraka, barefooted, without touching money, without thinking of the morrow and with one blanket as his bed and garment. Before his appearance in London in 1896 as a speaker and teacher of Vedanta his was a life of severe austerity, constant meditation and study.

His life took a new course when a call came from Swami Vivekananda to help him in his work in London. He threw away the loin-cloth of a Sannyasin, dressed himself in coat and turban, and sailed for England. A few days after his arrival in London, Swami Abhedananda gave an excellent address on the *Philosophy of Panchadas* at the Christo-Theosophical Society at Bloomsbury Square on the 27th October, 1896. Swami Vivekananda was present on that occasion and was highly pleased at the success of his spiritual brother. "Even if I perish out of this plane, my message will be sounded through these dear lips and the world will hear it." These were the beautiful



words with which Swami Vivekananda expressed his joy. The utterance was prophetic. Swami Vivekananda's message is being sounded, since his absence from the West, through these dear lips' and the world is hearing it for over a quarter of a century.

In December 1896, Swami Vivekananda left England for India giving Swami Abhedananda the entire charge of his work in London. Swami Abhedananda held regular classes, delivered public lectures and devoted much time in answering questions and objections arising either from the lecture or the position of Vedanta generally'. Thus Swami Abhedananda ably carried out the Vedanta work in London during the absence of his revered and beloved brother Swami Vivekananda.

When he was working hard to give a permanent footing to the London Vedanta Society, all of a sudden a call came to him from the other side of the Atlantic. He was obliged to disband his work in London and sailed for America. In August, 1897, he reached New York to organize the Vedanta society which was then in its infancy. He established himself there by the end of September, by holding regular classes and delivering public lectures on every Sunday. In six months, he delivered ninety lectures in Mott Memorial Hall alone and made the Vedanta Society self-supporting. He also opened a *Bhagavad Gita* class for the first time in America, and by his clear and highly instructive lectures on the philosophy and religion of the *Bhagavad Gita*, he created an absorbing interest among his students for the study of Sanskrit language to gain the first-hand knowledge of the *Bhagavad Gita* and other Hindu scriptures.

After the end of the New York session, Swami Abhedananda went to Washington D.C. for a rest. But at the request of the people who were eager to hear him, he gave lectures and addresses in the public halls, parlours and studios. He was introduced to President McKinley of U.S.A. and was kindly received. He also met John Brady, the Governor of Alaska and was the guest of Dr. Elmer Gates, the celebrated scientist and Psychologist. He then went to Boston to lecture before the Free Religious Association of America. At the invitation of Prof. William James, the great psychologist, he delivered a lecture before the students of the Harvard University. Next he visited Milford, Newton Highland, Salem, Montclair and Eliot.

and delivered lectures in all those places. He stopped in Greenacrie and worked there for four weeks. At last he went to the White Mountains in New Hampshire, where he enjoyed rest.

The New York session began again in November 1898. He lectured for five months during the session of 1898-99 and again spent the summer in travelling and lecturing in New England and other parts of the country. In October 1899, the Head Quarters and the Office of the Vedanta Society of New York were established. This gave a new impetus to the work, the rooms being opened daily for the sale of Vedanta literature and for class instruction. The public lectures were given in Tuxedo Hall. The Vedanta Society was incorporated duly under the laws of New York State. On Easter Monday he initiated four American Brahmacharis among whom Brahmachari Gurudas (Swami Atulananda) is well-known in the Ramakrishna Mission.

Throughout the spring and summer of 1900, Swami Abhedananda lectured in New England and the Middle States, while at the close of the following winter Swami Turiananda came from India to help him. By his untiring energy, unflinching courtesy, his readiness in answering questions, his erudition in Sanskrit language and his knowledge of modern science and philosophy, Eastern and Western, Swami Abhedananda firmly established Vedanta in the States, before Swami Vivekananda came to visit America for the second time. Vedanta was accepted by this time as an established fact by prominent persons and even by many ministers of Christian Churches. During the absence of Swami Vivekananda, Swami Abhedananda not only kept alive the movement, but also through his untiring exertions he pushed it further. And Vedanta spread into wider fields and gained firm foot-hold in the lives of the American people.

His lectures made a deep impression upon the public. The best papers of the State such as *The Sun*, *The New York Tribune*, *The Critic*, *The Literary Digest*, *The Times*, *The Intelligence*, and *The Mind*, published highly appreciative accounts of his teachings and personality. He met representative thinkers in the world of arts, science and religion, and awakened a "friendly interest in his mission and teachings

His activities created an ever-growing interest in the Vedanta movement. He was widely known throughout the intellectual circles in U.S.A. He made acquaintances with many celebrities of the States such as Profs. William James, Josiah Royce, Lanmann, Fay, Mr. Edison, the inventor, Dr. Elmer Gates, the celebrated scientist and psychologist, Joseph Jefferson, the great actor, Mr. Sweat Marden and Mr. Patterson, the New Thought writers, Mr. Ralph Waldo, Trine, the great thinker, William Dean Howells, the novelist, Profs. Herchel, C. Parker, Howison, C. C. Everett, D.D., Dr. Logan, Rev. R. H. Newton, Rev. Bishop Potter, and the professors of the Columbia, Harvard, Yale, Cornell, Berkely, and Clarke Universities.

In the July of 1899, Swami Vivekananda reached New York. He was glad to learn that the Vedanta Society had permanent Head Quarters and remarked, "Thrice I knocked at the door of New York but it did not respond. I am glad that you have established permanent head quarters. This is the first time I have found our own home in New York." Swami Abhedananda, who was away from New York on lecture tour, was soon wired to meet him and report all about the Vedanta work in New York. He met Swami Vivekananda and made reports concerning his work in America. Swami Vivekananda learned with great satisfaction that Vedanta made a striking progress during his absence. He insisted Swami Abhedananda to stay in America at least for ten years when the latter requested the Swami to make over the charge to somebody else, and to instruct him to return to India. In reply Swami Vivekananda wrote:

"My dear Abhedananda,

Many thanks for your nice words. I am just where you left me as about health. I have no directions to give, I leave the work entirely to you.

With love Yours,  
VIVEKANANDA "

In 1900-1901, Swami Abhedananda resumed the work in New York. The classes were held and public lectures delivered on Sundays. His speeches and writing made such a profound influence upon the minds of American people that he was invited to speak before the Societies, Churches, Associations,

Clubs, and Universities During the session of 1900-1901, he spoke before the council of Jewish Women in a Synagogue on invitation, on the festivities of the ancient Hebrews He was invited to speak before the Cremation Society, Spiritualistic Societies, Free Religious Association of America, Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Science, the Universities of Harvard, Clarke, Berkeley and Columbia He was also requested by the Council Board of Unity Church (in California) to conduct the Sunday Service

In the session of 1901-02, besides holding classes and delivering public lectures every Sunday, Swami Abhedananda lectured in Boston, Washington, Elot, Greenacre, Milford, Newton Highlands, Salem, Worcester, (Massachussets), New Port, Chesterfield, (Indiana) and several other places

A similar series of lectures began again in 1902-03 He delivered twenty-two lectures in Carnegie Lyceum During the month of April religious services were held on Sunday mornings in the Vedanta Society House and the attendance soon excelled the capacity of the room

In the winter of 1903-04, Swami Abhedananda delivered twenty-two lectures in Carnegie Lyceum, followed through March and April by Sunday morning services with lectures in Society House At the request of some of the students two lectures were also given in Assembly Hall during the month of March In May, on invitation of one of the members, the Swami paid a visit to St Louis Exhibition and the Society's publications were exhibited in the palace of Education in World's Fair The result of the exhibition was especially gratifying since through it hundreds from all parts of the country were made aware of the Vedanta work in America and led to recognize the practical value of its teachings Later on Swami Abhedananda sailed for Europe and at the urgent solicitation of friends and students in England, he took the preliminary steps towards the re-establishment of a London Centre

Early in 1904, more spacious quarters were established at 62, West 71st Street After taking possession of the new Head Quarters, the Swami carried the regular weekly classes and Sunday service In 1905, Swami Abhedananda delivered a course of lectures on *India and Her People* in the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Science As a result of the interest aroused

by public lectures delivered in Brooklyn by the Swami, a Raja Yoga class was organised there and regular weekly meetings were held throughout the season. In the Spring of the same year Swami Abhedananda was invited by some of the Associate members to lecture in Washington and preliminary steps were taken towards the formation of a New Branch in that city.

On May 16, 1906, Swami Abhedananda after ten years of hard toils in the field of religion and philosophy in foreign land, sailed from New York to England and thence by the Peninsular and Oriental Steamer *S S Multan* for Colombo in Ceylon where he landed on June 16, 1906. The feeling of profound gratitude which he has awakened in the hearts of the many to whom he has brought new light and peace is significantly shown in the farewell address presented to him by the Vedanta Society on the eve of his departure from New York, H H Maharaja and H H Maharani of Baroda were present when the farewell address was presented to the Swami.

#### FAREWELL ADDRESS TO SWAMI ABHEDANANDA

11

"Revered and Beloved Swami,

Although we hope that you will be with us again before the year is gone, it is none the less in a spirit of sadness and reluctance that we now come to offer you this farewell expression of our profound reverence, love and devotion.

"For nine years you have laboured tirelessly among us, enduring hardship, opposition, even enmity, yet pushing on your course undaunted and unchecked. When you came to New York, out of all those who had gathered so eagerly around Swami Vivekananda, you found scarcely a handful of earnest students. With these you began your labour. True to your Sannyasin spirit, in the heart of this commercial Metropolis, asking aid of no one, and with the infinite wisdom, patience, courage and tenacity which have characterized your efforts at every step, you began to build, stone by stone, the solid structure of the Vedanta Society as it stands today. Only those who know the conditions of New York can appreciate how great have been the difficulties and how noble is your achievement.

"You are now returning to India bearing with you the fruits of many years' experience in this new and more vigorous country, and we believe that your visit will prove rich in results, both for India and for America. It is this alone that makes

it possible for us to look forward with some degree of courage to the long months of separation which stretch before us

"You have been to us an ever wise and ever loving Master and Teacher. Many of us who came to you ill in body and mind are today strong in limb and full of new life. Others who crept into your presence bowed down with grief and despair, now walk with raised heads and joyful eyes. Not one has come to you in vain. Everywhere you have brought hope, gladness, strength and spiritual light. Never can we pay the mighty debt we owe to you, except in striving, day by day, nay hour by hour, to embody in our lives the lofty truths you have taught us, and to remain staunch and loyal to the work to which you have devoted your life. As you go forth to carry further your Mission, we can but pray with our whole hearts to the Divine Mother and your own Divine Mother, Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna, that your journey may bring not only blessing to others, but to yourself a fresh store of peace, joy, strength and inspiration with which you may bear ever onward the banner of Vedanta in America and over the whole world"

Addresses of welcome and Swami Abhedananda's replies-cum-lectures, which were delivered, were the *Aim of Religion*, *Female Education*, *Vedanta Philosophy*, *the Caste System*, *Advice to the Young Men*, *Universal Religion*, *Universality of Vedanta Religion*, *Practical Vedantism*, *The Responsibilities of Indian Students*, etc. All the lectures and replies of welcome addresses were instructive and enriched with religious and philosophical thoughts and ideas. The last lecture in India in 1906 was delivered in Bombay and the subject-matter was *Practical Vedantism*. In this lecture, Swami Abhedananda laid stress upon the study as well as on the universal ideal of the Vedanta philosophy of India. He said "Vedanta will make you live the right kind of life, will bring freedom to your soul, and ultimately will make you happy throughout eternity". The Swami lived the life of Vedanta and so it was possible for him to institute the real and sublime ideal of Vedanta.

On November 10, 1906, Swami Abhedananda accompanied by Swami Paramananda, sailed again for London

## CHAPTER XXXVI

### LEAVES FROM MY DIARY

*Leaves from My Diary* is an illuminating record of the activities and achievements of Swami Abhedananda in America and Europe in the propagation of Truth as embodied in the *Upanishads* and in the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna

Born at Ahirtola in the northern part of Calcutta, on 2nd of October, 1866, Kali Prasad as the Swami was then called, received the rudiments of education at a school in the neighbourhood, known as Jadu Pandit's School. Subsequently he joined the Oriental Seminary, which towards the middle of the nineteenth century, was a nursery of great men and Rasik Lal Chandra, the father of Kali Prasad, who was a veteran teacher of English in that Institution, was held in high esteem for his ripe scholarship, his lofty character, and above all, for his magnetic personality. The enthusiastic teacher was never weary of sowing seeds of future greatness in the minds of his pupils among whom may be mentioned the names of Krishna Das Pal, Grish Chandra Ghose, Amrita Lal Bose. Young Kali Prasad inherited in an ample measure his father's insatiable thirst for knowledge, deep devotion to truth, resolute will to follow the right in scorn of consequence. To that high-souled lady, Nayantara Devi, his mother, who was rich in the abundance of her faith in the goodness of God he owes his vision beyond the world of something unworldly, his longing for the Great Unknown, behind the mysterious veil of phenomena—the Great Unknown which is at the same time the most assuredly known in one's self-consciousness.

As an earnest student, who delighted in the poetry of Kalidasa, Bhababhuti, Banabhatta, and argued about the inspiring philosophy of Hume, Mill, Spencer, Kali Prasad was looked upon as a prodigy. He passed the Entrance Examination in the University of Calcutta held in 1882. But great things were predicted of him. The prophecy has come true, but not in the sense in which it was then interpreted. The path of glory that ends in death, he has not chosen to tread. He has sought

immortal life in the glorious company of Sri Ramakrishna

The crisis came in 1883. Drawn into the magnetic influence of Sri Ramakrishna he saw life in a new light,—life as realization and service,—life as the fulfilment of the law that elevates the individual to the Universal. Swami Abhedananda was in intimate relationship of his Master and was duly initiated into the mysteries of *sadhana* of Yoga. With Swami Vivekananda, Swami Brahmananda, and others he belonged to the innermost circle of the blessed eleven round the Prophet. In 1886, the world-seer cast off his coarse bodily garment and the young Sannyasin Abhedananda set out on his extensive travels in India. In 1896, Swami Vivekananda needed his help in London, and the Swami threw himself heart and soul into the work of preaching, to the people of the West, Vedanta as represented and realized in the luminous life of his Divine Master, Sri Ramakrishna. He gathered round him a whole host of admirers and men like Max Muller, Paul Deussen, who marvelled at the depth of his learning, the wide catholicity of his mind, and the purity of his soul. The return of Swami Vivekananda to India, in 1897, was a source of great disappointment to his numerous friends and disciples in America. At the earnest solicitation of Miss Philips, the secretary of the New York Vedanta Society and at the request of Swami Vivekananda, Swami Abhedananda proceeded to New York in 1897 and became the spiritual head of the Institution. As a devout religious teacher, as a powerful preacher who carried conviction into the hearts of the people, and as a saintly man, the name of Swami Abhedananda soon spread far and wide into the homes of the people of America—the United States, Canada, Alaska, Mexico, Brazil, the Argentine Republic.

*Leaves from My Diary* will thus prove to be of perennial interest to those who love and value the day to day incidents of the life of Swami Abhedananda. It will also bring to view many a sealed page in the history of the Ramakrishna Movement. It will afford much food for serious thought to the present generation of men and women in India, who are bewitched by the glamour of the West. True the winds have shifted, the tides have ebbed and flowed, and true the boat swings, but let the anchor hold.



## CHAPTER XXXVII

### BHAGAVAD GITA

#### *The Divine Message*

#### INTRODUCTION

The universal teachings of the *Bhagavad Gita*, or the divine messages of Sri Krishna, form the part of the *Bhishmaparva* of the *Mahabharata*. The divine teachings of the *Gita* have been depicted in the dialogue between Sri Krishna and the warrior Arjuna. Arjuna faced the terrible and fierce battle of the *dhrmakshetra* Kurukshetra and placed his chariot in between the Kaurava and Pandava soldiers and Sri Krishna was his charoteer or *Sarathi*, friend and guide in the battle-field. Dr Radhakrishnan says that Arjuna's cry or demand was simple yet tremendous and damaging one, "significant of the tragedy of man, which all, who can see beyond the actual drama of the hour, can recognize. The mood of despair, in which Arjuna is found in the first chapter of the *Gita*, is what the mystics call the dark night of the soul, an essential step in the upward path \* \* Krishna stands for the voice of God, delivering his message in the thrilling notes, warning Arjuna against dejection of spirit \* \* As the dialogue proceeds, the dramatic element disappears. The echoes of the battle-field die away, and we have only an interview between God and man."

The entire *Bhagavad Gita* has been divided into eighteen chapters and each chapter has been named with the titles ending with Yoga, such as, (1) arjuna-vishada-yoga, (2) sankhya-yoga, (3) karma-yoga, (4) jnana-yoga, (5) sannyasa-yoga, (6) dhyana-yoga, (7) jnana-vijnana-yoga, (8) akshara-brahma-yoga, (9) raja-yoga, (10) vibhuti-yoga, (11) visvarupa-darshana-yoga, (12) bhakti-yoga, (13) kshetra-kshetrajna-yoga, (14) gunatraya-vibhaga-yoga, (15) purushottama-yoga, (16) daivasura-sampad-vibhaga-yoga, (17) shaddhatraya-vibhaga-yoga, (18) moksha-yoga. Now these eighteen chapters or Yogas can be classified into four main heads, *karmayoga*, *bhaktiyoga*,

*jnanayoga* and *rajayoga* or spiritual practices of work as worship, devotion, concentration and meditation, and knowledge

The *Bhagavad Gita* can be said to be the extract or essence of the *Upanishads*, which are known as Vedanta "*vedanta-namo upanishad-pramanam*" In the contemplative composition or *dhyana* of the *Gita*, it has been mentioned

सर्वोपनिषदो गावो दोग्धा गोपालनन्दन ।

पार्थो वत्सः सुधीर्भोक्ता दुग्ध गीतामृतं महत् ॥

That is, the *Upanishads* are like the cows, those bear milk or *amrita* and Sri Krishna, the milkman, churned or extracted that milk or *amrita* from those cows or *Upanishads* and distributed it to the wise (*sudhi*) ones who are seekers after highest knowledge From this it is evident that the *Bhagavad Gita* is a condensed form of all the *Upanishads* that teach the supreme knowledge of the Brahman

Swami Abhedananda says that as Jesus the Christ was a historical person (though scholars and historians like Strauss, Robertson, Connybear, Drews and others refuted the historicity of Jesus), so was Sri Krishna The Swami has discussed the lives and personalities of both the Saviours, Sri Krishna and Jesus the Christ, from various authentic sources in the *Introduction* of this book, as Mr J M Robertson discussed on 'Christ and Krishna' in his monumental work, *Christianity and Mythology* But the Swami's treatment on 'Krishna and Christ' is quite different and at the same time new and novel

The Swami writes "The similarities between the birth and death stories of Krishna and those of Christ and the coincidences of the principal events and miracles in the lives of those two Saviours are so great and startling that the first Christian missionaries who entered India were astonished

They were like two brothers or two manifestations of the same Divinity and two different names separated only by time and space" Now it can be asked as to why Swami Abhedananda compares the life and teachings of Krishna with those of Christ, while discussing about the divine teachings of the *Bhagavad Gita*, the most sacred scripture of the Hindus To this it can be said that the Swami delivered his lectures on the *Gita* before the talented Western audiences and so he com-

paratively discussed the lives and personalities of those two Saviours for their easy and real appreciation

The teachings of the *Bhagavad Gita* are divine, synthetic and universal. The *Gita* teaches theism and regards God as the supreme and perfect person (Purushottama). It is a synthetic universal message of the Supreme Spirit, and it harmonizes all the contradictory views and doctrines of different religious sects and practices. It advocates dualistic monism, preaches the cult of Basudeva-Krishna, and enjoins different Yogas for the attainment of Godconsciousness. Now, we find a gradual evolutionary process in the conceptions of Krishna, Krishna-Vasudeva, Vasudeva-Krishna, Vishnu, Vishnu-Narayana, etc. Arjuna is regarded as a spiritual aspirant amidst the ocean of *samsara* or world, and Sri Krishna is known as a divine guide, faithful friend and realized *Guru*. Amidst hundreds and thousands of works and duties of the world, Sri Krishna taught Arjuna the unreality and fleeting nature of the world and at the same time illumined him with divine knowledge. Well has it been said by Sri Aurobindo in his *Essays on the Gita*: "We must accept the insistence of the author and give its full importance to this recurrent preoccupation of the Teacher and the disciple. The teachings of the *Gita* must, therefore, be regarded not merely in the light of a general spiritual philosophy or ethical doctrine, but as bearing upon practical crisis in the application of ethics and spirituality to human life." Similarly, it has been said by the Western savant, Rudolf Otto, in his *The Original Gita* (The Song of the Supreme Exalted One): "In India again, and also by Western commentators, the work is regarded principally as the fundamental doctrinal *Text* of the Hindu '*bhakti*' religion. This, in the first place, is the religious attitude which is trust, faith and love, turns to the Personal God, Who is the Redeemer from the evils of *samsara*—of a wandering existence or migration in the universe, but in its modern form the spiritual attitude just referred to, doctrines selected from the expanding systems of *Sankhya* and *Yoga*, from the ancient moralistic doctrine of the three *gunas* or 'constituents of Nature', from the theology of the old Vedic sacrificial cult and, finally, from Vedantic speculation and soteriological teaching about the transcendent super-personal Brahman which arise from the cult."

Now the opinions about ethics, philosophy, and essence of the *Bhagavad Gita* may differ from one another, but most of the thinkers hold that *Prakriti*, the embodiment of the *gunas*, *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, is the material cause of the world-appearance and is modified into the world under the guidance of Divine Will of God, the Prime-Mover and Spiritual Spirit. God is considered as the ground of empirical being and non-being. He is the transcendental supreme person (*Purushottama*) beyond *kshara-Purusha* and *akshara-Purusha*. The *kshara-Purusha* is the finite mobile Spirit which is manifested in the corporate body of conscious embodied souls. The *akshara-Purusha* is the infinite immobile Spirit, which transcends the infinite mobile Spirits. God, as *Purushottama*, transcends both and yet is not an abstract universal, but the concrete determinate Spirit, the embodiment of eternal being, consciousness and bliss and eternal *dharma*.

In the fourteenth chapter, *gunatraya vibhaga-yoga* has been explained and this entire chapter has been devoted to *purushottama-yoga*, in which the absolute Reality or *Purushottama*, as maintained by the *Gita*, has been explained. In the 27th *sloka*, Sri Krishna says,

ब्रह्मणो हि प्रतिष्ठममृतरयाव्ययस्य च ।

शश्वतस्य च धर्मस्य सुखस्यैकान्तिकस्य च ॥

Sri Krishna says that the absolute Brahman is the ground or substratum (*adhisthana*) of the universe with all its objects, sentient and insentient, and that ground should be determined, or be realized by knowledge or *jnana-vichara*. The permanent and imperishable *dharma* is absolute happiness which is no other than realization of the Brahman. In the chapter of *purushottama-yoga*, two realities, *kshara* and *akshara*, are explained as,

द्राविमो पुरुषौ लोके क्षरश्चाक्षर एव च ।

क्षरः सर्वं णि भूतानि कुटस्थोऽक्षर उच्यते ॥

That is, the *kshara-Purusha* is composed of the world and the beings, which are fleeting and perishable, and the *akshara-Purusha* is possessed of *mayasakti* or *Prakriti*, by the help of

which He creates i.e. projects the manifold world with its living and non-living beings. Here the word *kutastha* of the *Gita* bears different meaning or significance than the word (*nirgunatva*) of the transcending Advaita Brahman. The word *kutastha* was explained by Sankara and Madhusudana Sarasvati and also by Sridhara Swami and Anandagiri in different ways, but their final conclusions are the same.

The Purushottama is known as *Isvara*. The *Gita* says,

उत्तमं पुण्यस्त्वन्य परमात्म लुदाहृतः ।

योऽलोकत्रयमाविश्य विभर्त्य व्यय ईश्वरः ॥

यस्माद् क्षरमतीतोऽहमक्षरादपि चोत्तमः ।

अतोऽस्मि लोके वेदे च प्रथितं पुण्योत्तमः ॥

This Purushottama-*Isvara* of the *Gita* is *avyaya* Narayana. Madhusudana Sarasvati said in his commentary

‘अव्ययः सर्वविकारशून्य ईश्वरः सर्वस्य नियन्ता नारायणः स उत्तमः पुण्य परमात्मे लुदाहृत इत्यन्वयः’ । ‘स उत्तमः पुण्यः’ इति श्रुते (क्वा. उ. १)

Here the “immutability of the Absolute and the activity of *Isvara*, both are taken over in the conception of Purushottama’ Sri Krishna says that knowledge of the absolute Reality, Purushottama, is the secret of all secrets “*guhya tamam shastram idam*” Sri Krishna has therefore, instructed all to completely surrender to Him (*bhaja me mam sarva bhavena*) and He will rescue them from the dark abyss of ignorance and will impart knowledge of the absolute Reality. It should be noticed that Sri Krishna has used the first person, ‘I’, ‘Me’, ‘Mine’ (*aham, mam, mayi*), etc., in many places of the *Gita* in order to express His all-pervading nature and all-embracing personality, and so when He uses the first person He remains there as *atmastha* i.e. identified with His real transcending nature. Swamis Vivekananda and Abhedananda are of the opinion that whenever Sri Krishna uses in the *Gita*, ‘I, Me, and Mine’, He uses them being *atmastha* or identified with the divine idea of ‘Greater I’. Dr Radhakrishna puts it in a different way. He says “When Krishna calls upon us to become his devotees, when he shows the *visvarupa* or the world-form, whenever he uses the first person, we have references to the manifested aspect of the Supreme. This side of

divine nature is involved in the work of creation, where it loses itself in the succession of time and the waves of becoming. Beyond it all is another status, the silent and the immutable, than which there is nothing higher. The two together form the Purushottama." In reality, Purushottama transcends the categories of cause and effect (*karya-karanatva dharma*). It is neither *lshara*, nor *akshara*, but transcends *kshara* and *akshara*, or rather forms the background (*pratistha*) of *kshara* and *akshara*—*vyakta* and *avyakta*—*Hiranyagarbha* and *Isvara*. This Purushottama is the neutral point which is neither the subject, nor the object, and at the same time connects and harmonizes the subject and the object. Besides, the *Gita* (13th Chapter) has discussed about *Kshetra* and *Kshetrajna*, *Prakriti* and *Purusha*, *jneya* and *jnata*, *jeva* and *Isvara*.

“क्षेत्रं मायाकल्पितं मिथ्या, क्षेत्रदृक्ष परमार्थसत्य \* \* मोक्षसाधनवाजहानम् ।”

This *paramarthika-satya* is the Brahman. Here it should be mentioned that the Sankhya-yoga, as enunciated by Sri Krishna in the *Bhagavad Gita* (second chapter), bears some separate and new meaning or interpretation from the meaning or interpretation that was depicted in Kapila's Sankhya system that rejected the existence of God (*Isvara*) as the prime-cause of evolution of the world-process. The *Gita* perhaps has incorporated the ideas of indestructibility of everything from Kapila's Sankhya.

(क) नास्त्यो विद्यते भावो नाभावो विद्यते सतः । २ । १३

(ख) अविनाशि तु तद्विद्धि येन सर्वमिदं ततम् । २ । १७

(ग) अव्यक्तादीनि भुतानि व्यक्तमघ्यानि भारत । २ । २८

The Sankhya-yoga of the *Gita* also admits the existence as well as utility of God as the Creator and Prime-mover of the world with its twenty-four *tattvas* (*chaurvimshei-tattva*) like Kapila who said *Isvara* is *asiddha*. So the Sankhya-yoga of the *Bhagavad Gita* can be known as *sa-Isvara-yoga* (Yoga that admits God), and it contains purely the instructions on the 'doctrine of realization' or *tattvajñāna* (vide *Gita*, II 11-30 *slokas*). In the *Gita*, the Yoga or Sankhya-yoga is the means of training of intellect (*buddhi*) so as to act without asking for the fruit of work. And the *Gita* says about skill or dexterity (*kaushala*) with regard to actions (*karma*). Sri Krishna says

that the wise 'who thus armed in spirit, concern themselves not with the fruit produced by action, are released from the bonds of rebirth and go to abode *free from sickness*' Therefore, Sankhya-yoga, as advised by the *Gita*, is known as Buddhi-yoga that brings discrimination (*viveka*) between the real and the unreal and thus unfastens the bond of *samsara*

एषा तेऽभिहिता सास्त्रे बुद्धियोगं त्विमां शृणु ।

बुद्ध्या युक्तो यया पार्थ , कर्मबन्धुं प्रहासयसि ॥ २ । ३९

The Sankhya-yoga of the *Gita* teaches *naïskarma*-Karma-yoga, known as the *moksha-mārga* i.e., the path to release and realization The *Gita*, therefore, admits three *gunas* like *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, and has said that a man who aspires to be free from the chain of *samsara* (world), should transcend the chain of three *gunas*, which are the categories of *maya* or nescience

That is, Yoga, or Sankhya-yoga, or Buddhi-yoga, or Karma-yoga, brings desirelessness or *nirvāsanā* that causes liberation or *moksha* and they, who aspire for fruits of works, are miser Similarly, Jnana-yoga, Sannyasa-yoga and Dhyana-yoga, as advocated in the *Bhagavad Gita*, bear somewhat new and novel interpretations or meanings from those, depicted in Advaita Vedānta and Patanjali's Yoga-system But it should be remembered that the teachings of the *Bhagavad Gita* firmly stand on the solid rock of the *Upanishad* which is no other than Vedānta

The *Bhagavad Gita* reconciles or synthesises intellect and intuition (*buddhi* and *bodhi*) and has directed them towards the highest plane of spiritual apprehension, nay, towards the sphere of divine realization of the secondless absolute Reality In the letter to Flaccus, the mystic philosopher, Plotinus has expressed this highest plane in a different way He said "There are different roads by which this end (of spiritual apprehension) may be reached The love of beauty which exalts the poets, that devotion to One" Opinions or expressions of the great savants may differ, but the teachings of the *Gita* lead men to the definite goal of salvation or *moksha* Sri Krishna says in the *Gita* that self-surrender (*ātma-samarpana*) is the best means to reach the highest destination of human life, and this instruction reminds us the *vakalmā* (self-

surrender) of Girish Chandra Ghose to Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa Sri Krishna says in the *moksha-yoga* (eighteenth chapter of the *Gita*)

मन्मना भव मद्भक्तो मद्याजी मां नमस्कुरु ।

मासेवैष्यसि सत्यं ते प्रतिजाने प्रियोऽसि मे ॥

सर्वधर्मान् परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं व्रज ।

अहं त्वा सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः ॥

Before suggesting the idea of *sarva-dharmān parityajya*, etc Sri Krishna advises Arjuna to completely surrender unto him (18 57-65) Sri Krishna says to Arjuna, if you are devoted to me and give up all antagonistic religious views, doctrines, and dogmas, and surrender your self unto me, I assure you that I shall rescue you from all sins and from ignorance (*maya*) Swami Abhedananda says that until and unless we surrender and renounce everything for the cause of realizing the *Atman* and make ourselves the playground of the Almighty, so long the categories of *jñana*, *jñeya* and *jñata* will not be removed, and so long we will not be able to make ourselves free from the bindings of *samsara*. We must not take the unreal material body and organs as the real or *Atman*, but should go beyond attachment (*kama*), attraction (*raga*) for the material things, egotism, vanity, and everything, that cause diversion of our mind from the *Atman*, and when we will be able to concentrate and meditate upon the immortal *Atman*, we will realize the Brahman even in this life. And after attaining the supreme knowledge of the Brahman, we will be above all sorrows, desires and bondages,

The real contention of the *śloka* 2 46 is that when a man does everything in this world of action without asking any result of action, his mind is purified being concentrated in the prime object, the *Atman*, or the Brahman, which is no other than an immediate absorption in the eternal enjoyment i.e., *Brahmananda* or *Brahmanirvana*, he attains all knowledge (of the universe) being in tune with the all-consciousness Brahman. All his desires are fulfilled, all knots of his mind are unfastened and all doubts are solved. And so all the commentators said

“फलकामनया हि कर्म कुर्वन् फलस्य हेतुहृद्भादको भवति । त्वं तु निष्काम



सन् कर्मफलहेतुर्मायुः । न हि निष्कामेन भगवदपेक्षयुद्धया कृत्वा कर्म फलाय कल्पत इत्युक्तम्”—( मधुसूदन सरस्वती ) ।

Sri Krishna says that work (*karma*) is not a bondage, as by Karma Yoga a man can remove the darkness of ignorance (*ajnana*) and can attain Godconsciousness. Only the secret (*kaushala*) is this that all works should be performed in the spirit of worship of God (‘ईश्वरार्पणमुद्धरा’) and that spirit will purify the heart and will enable us to realize the Brahman-consciousness. All through the teachings of the *Gita*, Sri Krishna instructs all men to work and to work without asking the result in the spirit of worship.

There are many commentaries and glossaries on the *Bhagavad Gita*. The teachers like Sankara, Ramanuja, Madhva, Nimvarka, Srikantha, Ballabha, Sridhara Swami, Madhusudana Sarasvati, Baladeva Vidyabhushan, Visvanatha Chakravarti, Abhinavagupta and others wrote commentaries and glossaries from different viewpoints, and though they differ in their views and arguments, yet all of them are of the same opinion that emancipation of the soul from the bondage of ignorance or *samsara* is essential. Sankara interpreted all the teachings of the *Gita* from the non-dualistic (Advaita) viewpoint and said that Sri Krishna, the Purushottama, is the embodiment of highest consciousness, and until and unless we attain that consciousness or Brahman-knowledge, we shall not be able to go beyond *maya* and *samsara*. Madhusudana Sarasvati followed Sankara and interpreted the whole *Gita* from monistic standpoint, though sometimes we notice the devotional tendency of his mind towards Parabrahman, Vasudeva-Krishna.

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व शीविभुषितकराक्षवनीरदाभात् पीताम्बरादरुणविम्बफलाधरोष्ठात् ।

पुणंन्दुसुन्दरमुखारविन्दुनेत्रात् कृष्णात् परं कर्मापि तत्त्वमहं न जाने ॥

Ramanuja interpreted the teachings of the *Gita* from the qualified non-dualistic standpoint (*visishtadvaitavada*). He developed his philosophy of *chit* and *achit* based on the attributes of *Ishvara*, the determinate Brahman. In fact, Ramanuja's concepts of *chit* (*Ishvara* or God) and *achit* (*jiva* and *jagat*) as attributes of the Brahman developed from the concepts of *para-Prakriti* and *apara-Prakriti* of the *Bhagavad*

*Gita* *Maya* or nescience was regarded by Ramanuja as a real appearance and a power of God (*Isvara-sakti*), and by the help of that inherent power God creates the world and all living and non-living beings, or God creates various creatures out of his *Prakṛti* according to their merits and demerits (*dharma* and *adharma*). But *maya* or nescience has been looked upon by Sankara as fleeting and impermanent something which is neither existent (*sat*), nor non-existent (*asat*), nor existent and non-existent (*sadasat*), but inexplicable (*anirvachanīya*), and the Brahman is the only real and all things other than the Brahman is unreal

Sīdhara Swami maintained the doctrine of devotion (*bhakti*), though sometimes we find him inclined to the doctrine of knowledge with devotion (*jñānamāśra-bhakti*). Nīmvarka interpreted the teachings of the *Gita* from the doctrine of dualistic monism (*dvaitadvaitavāda*), as he insists on difference as well as non-difference or identity between the Brahman and the world with its individual souls. Bhaskarāchārya and Yādavaprakāśh interpreted the teachings of the *Gita* in similar ways. Madhva was a staunch follower of dualism and so he interpreted the teachings of the *Gita* from the dualistic viewpoint (*dvaitavāda*). Madhva practically recognized five distinctions of God (*Isvara*) like the individual souls (*jīva*), the individual (*jīva*) and matter (*jada*), one individual soul and another (*eka-jīva* and *anya-jīva*), and one material thing and another (*eka-jada-padartha* and *anya-jada-padartha*), and so he has finally constructed his philosophy of the *Bhagavad Gita* on the doctrine of dualism and realism.

Swami Abhedananda has followed the path of the ancient ones, and yet has thrown some new light with the teachings of Bhagavan Śrī Ramakṛṣṇa Paramahansa, together with the theories of modern science and contemporary thoughts. The Swami says "Through all the acts of His (Śrī Krishna's) life, whether in politics, in war, or in the duties of householder, He emphasised and proved the truth of the grand ethical law, that where there is virtue, there is the prospect of victory and glorious life, both in this world and hereafter, and whenever there are vice, unrighteousness, injustice, and immortality, there is destruction, physical, moral and spiritual"

## II

### PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

Swami Abhedananda has divided his entire discussions on the *Bhagavad Gita* into sixty-five illuminating chapters. In the chapter I (*Gita* I 1-38), the Swami has prepared the ground of his discussions on the *Gita*. He has said that the individual soul or *jivatman* is the commander-in-chief of the chariot of the body with all the armies of different forces that are working around us, and Sri Krishna is the Divine Spirit or *Param-atman* within us. In our everyday life, if we act in the *samsara* under the guidance of *buddhi* and *viveka*, as Arjuna fought in the battle-field of the Kurukshetra under the able guidance of Sri Krishna, then we will ultimately reach the goal of all religions.

Swami Abhedananda says that senses of I, Me, and Mine are the root of all evils and bondages in the world (*samsara*), and the senses of Thy, Thee, and Thine bring freedom to the soul. A wise man is one who knows the secret of Thy, Thee, and Thine, because he ultimately comes to know the way of getting rid of the senses of I, Me, and Mine, which is no other than egotism and selfishness. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa has said "*nāham, nāham, tuhu tuhu*", i.e., the senses of I, Me, and Mine should be removed and the way of self-resignation to the will of God should be adopted. Sri Krishna also instructs all that they should not be weak, but should be strong enough to face all kinds of obstruction and danger so as to realize that self-delusion is the cause of misery, sorrow and suffering. Real peace and happiness come with the removal of self-delusion and fear of death and bondage, and as soon as we shall be able to make ourselves the playground of the Almighty, we shall attain Godconsciousness and eternal knowledge.

chapter II deals with *Mortality and Immortality of the Soul* (*Gita*, II), i.e., deals with the true nature of the soul which is immortal. It does not die, as death happens only in the material body. As a man changes his old garments and puts on new ones, so the soul (*jivatman*) leaves his old and worn-out body and enters into a new one. So we find that the real nature of the *jivatman* is deathless and immortal. The

*Atman*, the real form and essence of the *jivatman*, is beginningless and endless, and is above time, space and causation, which are known as nescience or *maya*. The Swami says that mind substance is the medium of contact or communication between the gross material body and the immaterial immortal soul (*jivatman* and *Paramatman*), between matter and spirit, and also between the soul (*jivatman*) and the senses and the objects of the senses (*indriyas* and *indriya-vishayas*). So if the mind is impure, it cannot communicate, or it communicates with wrong knowledge instead of right knowledge. The *Bhagavad Gita* and all other Scriptures of the Hindus, says the Swami teach that the mind should be clean and transparent and be detached from all kinds of desire and craving, so as to catch the undying self-efulgent light of the immortal *Atman*. The *Yoga-darshana* and the *Bhagavad Gita* says that we should adopt repeated practices and renunciation "*abhyasa-varagabhyam tannirodhah*". *Abhasa* means repeated efforts for spiritual practice ('*tatra yatno'bhayah*'), and *varagya* means detachment from the sense-objects (*vishaya-vitrishna*). Besides, Vedanta says that right discrimination (*viveka*) is necessary for ascertaining reality from unreality. Right knowledge removes the knots of ignorance and doubt, and enables men to attain the transcendental Reality.

Sri Ramakrishna said that the real meaning or significance of the *Gita* is realized when we utter the word *Gita* repeatedly, i.e., when we say the word *Gita* in a repeated way, we find the words *tyagi, tyagi, tyagi*, which means renunciation (*tyaga-varagya*). As long as we remain as selfish, being entangled in the net of *samsara* or desires (*vasanas*), so long we shall not be able to realize the real essence of the *Bhagavad Gita*. So Sri Krishna says that detachment is freedom, and attachment is bondage, and he, therefore, instructs everyone to perform work in this world of duties disinterestedly, without asking results thereof, because desire for the result of works are no other than the chain that binds men and drags them into the den of delusion or *maya*. "*phale sakto nibadhyate*" We have right to do works only and not to ask their results "*karmanye vadhu karaste ma phaleshu kadachana*". This is known as the doctrine of renunciation (*tyaga* or *varagya*),

which brings with it the boon of self-surrender (*atma-samarpana*) to the will of God Śrī Krishna has delivered these messages for the good and welfare of the mankind, and has laid stress upon this doctrine of renunciation and self-surrender.

Swami Abhedananda says, the wise ones realize that all activities of body and mind are like those in a dream state, because these things do not exist there in reality, and these activities stop when we attain the superconscious state or *samadhi*. The *Mundaka Upanishad* explained four states of a man, or of the mind, and they are conscious state (*jagrat*), dream (*svapna*), dreamless sleep (*sushupti*), and superconscious state (*turiya* or *samadhi*). In the Western psychology, there are only three states, and they are subconsciousness or unconsciousness (*avachetana*), consciousness (*chetana*), and superconsciousness (*parachetana*). Tania philosophy admits seven levels of consciousness, and they are *mulādhāra*, *svādhīsthāna*, *manipura*, *anāhata*, *viśuddha*, *ajñā*, and *sahasrara*. The *Upanishad* further divided the level of experience, or consciousness into five and they are *annamaya*, *manomaya*, *prānamaya*, *vyānamaya*, and *annandamaya*. Vedānta divided consciousness into four, and they are *Virāta*, *Hiranyagarbha*, *Isvara*, and *Turiya* or the Fourth. The *Yogavāsistha*, *Ramayana* and some other *Upanishads* divided the level of consciousness into some more strata. In fact, the supreme consciousness is the non-relational and transcending one which knows no division of state.

Swami Abhedananda puts it in a different way, when he says "That which does not change in these four states or in more other states, is permanently true. What is that thing? Śrī Krishna has tried to explain this thus: 'When you say that you are going to kill some one, you cannot kill that which is permanent, you think you are killing, but how can you kill? One thing we must remember that what exists permanently, can never change. Existence never becomes non-existence. If we exist today, we would exist in the past and will exist in future. It is quite true that every seventh year we go through a change in the atoms of the body, but that does not mean the Soul or *Atman* changes. The Soul is immortal, whereas body, the abode of the Soul, is mortal.'

The Swami forwards three main theories regarding the

existence of the soul, and they are (a) *production theory*, (b) *combination theory*, and (c) *transmission theory* (a) The *production theory* proves that material body is the producer or creator of the soul, (b) The *combination theory* proves that the soul is the product of a combination of matter and forces, and (c) the *transmission theory* proves that the soul exists outside of the material body, but manifests through the medium of this organism. Among these theories, the first two are upheld mostly by the materialists, agnostics, and scientists. But these two theories can be refuted by the argument that matter can never give birth to anything that is not matter, matter produces only matter, and not energy or spirit, and it is a fact that matter or combination of matter or material forces will never produce or create the sense of 'I', and this sense of 'I' is the conscious soul or knower which never changes.

The chapter III deals with *True Nature of the Soul* (Gita, II). The Swami explains the true nature of the soul in the light of the *Gita*, that the soul is beginningless and endless, and death means change which occurs only in the material body. The ordinary (deluded) souls are under the pressure of environments and their life is nothing but a constant resistance to that pressure and their effort of resistance is a power which can be called the *will-power*. Now, if their will-power is stronger, they succeed in overcoming the difficulties and obstacles that obstruct the path of progress, and attain eternal peace and happiness. Peace and happiness that originate from the contact of the senses with the objects, both material and mental, are unreal, and so the wise control the senses, go beyond the senses, and attain true peace and happiness which are the nature of the *Atman*.

These are things like matter, senses, mind, intellect, and intuition or consciousness. What do we mean by matter? *Matter* is that which registers. But it has no consciousness. The *senses* are the gateways of receiving the sensations of matter or objects. John Stuart Mill defines matter as an eternal substance which is neither a subject, nor an object, but yet appears as a subject or an object. That eternal substance makes us feel everything external. The *mind* is a subtle matter which plays a dual role of doubting and affirming.

*Intellect* is the power of understanding, and makes us separate individuals. *Intuition* or consciousness brings penetration into the core of things and makes us understand the real nature of things.

Now, what do we mean by ego and *Atman*? The Swami explains that ego is that which suffers, knows, thinks and does everything. The ego is the chimney part of the lamp and the light part is the *Atman*. The true nature of the ego or soul is the *Atman*, which is immortal and unchanging. And this *Atman* is the ground of everything, living and non-living. It animates and saturates everything of the material and the mental world.

*Atman is without beginning and end*

The chapter IV deals with the *Atman is without Beginning and End* (*Gita*, II 15-19). The *Gita* says that everything we perceive or feel through our senses, has beginning and end. So it can be asked as to what is then permanent and changeless? Swami Abhedananda says "Vedanta teaches that the world has not come out of nothing, nor does it go, back to nothing. There is a reality or unchangeable something, and that unchangeable reality is the *Atman* which forms the living force and support of the changing universe."

We are like the waves and bubbles in that ocean of reality. Reality is light and unreality is darkness and hell. Sri Krishna has advised us to go beyond darkness and hell and to enjoy the light of eternal light and heaven.

The chapter V deals with *Vedantic Conception of the Soul* (*Gita*, II 26-27). Swami Abhedananda has compared the materialists with the Charvakas who did not believe in anything which is beyond the sense perception. There is a class of the Buddhist philosophers who believe in that materialistic theory, and disbelieve in the existence of the soul. Some of the Western thinkers consider the soul as the psychic activity or the activity of the mind. They take soul as mentality. But, in India, soul is considered as different from mind. The Indian philosophers recognise the soul as the prime-mover and director of the mind. The *Upanishad* says that mind is useless until the soul does exist behind mind. The mind is compared to the moon which borrows its light from the sun. The sun is the soul or *Atman* that shines all the time with its self-revealing light or lustre. Swami Abhedananda

says "Kant tried to know it (soul, but said that it is beyond human conception, beyond our mind, and cannot be described. It is there, but reason cannot establish its existence'. Kant called the soul or Absolute unknown and unknowable, but how Kant came to know that it is unknown and unknowable? So it should be taken that the unknown and unknowable soul or Absolute was known to Kant, and, therefore, the soul or Absolute was not altogether unknown and unknowable. So Prof Otto Plöderer found a fallacy in Kant's higher perception of the Absolute.

But, in India, says Swami Abhedananda, Vedanta considers the higher soul or *Atman* as knowable or attainable, and it is known in the immediate higher apperception (*aparokshānubhūti*). The soul or *Atman* is supersensible and immortal, and yet is apperceived by the shining sense, *buddhi* or purified mind. Vedanta says that when the self-effulgent light of the *Atman* or Brahman is reflected in the shining mirror of the intellect or *buddhi*, nescience or *ajñāna* in the intellect is replaced or sublated by the eternal light, which is eternal knowledge of the *Atman* or Brahman.

The Brahman is called the *Sacchidānanda*, i.e., Existence-Knowledge-Bliss. Existence is *sat* or permanent Reality, and everything in this world depends upon this existence. All kinds of conscious activity presuppose our existence which we do not doubt. Further, we do not need a sense-perception to prove the existence of the true Self, nor do we need any support or inference or inductive reasoning for its existence, but if we wish to know its true nature, what it is like, we can do so by turning our inward mind towards it. Turn our whole nature to it and we can do it, but we require self-control and concentration. We should purify our mind, so as to catch the undying light of the self-effulgent *Atman*.

The *Gita* says "The true nature of the soul which is not subject to birth and death, leaves a body and takes another, as we throw off our old garments and put on new ones" (2.22). Swami Abhedananda says, soul means the true nature *plus* the thinking principle, psychic activities, powers of senses, knowledge, and action. All these remain latent in the subtle body. There are three sheaths of the soul and they are the gross physical body, the subtle body, and the causal body. The



causal body is the eternal energy, where remain all the forces in a latent state. The real nature of the soul transcends also the causal body and shines eternally with its undying glory. It is indestructible, unchangeable, everlasting, and immortal.

The chapter VI deals with *The Manifested and the Unmanifested* (*Gita*, II 28-49). The *Gita* says that beginning of everything is unmanifested, it manifests in the middle, and at the end it goes back to the unmanifested state—*avyaktādini bhutani*, etc. The *Upanishad* says '*asatah sat jayate*' i.e., the world-appearance evolved from the undifferentiated consciousness which is *Avyakta* or *Avyākṛita*. It is the causal nescience (*kāraṇa-ānana*) which exists with *Isvara*, the Second Principle. From *Isvara*, *Hiranyagarbha* *Prajapati* evolved, and *Hiranyagarbha* gave birth to *Vīra*, the manifested world and its beings. But the supreme unrelated consciousness underlies all the evolved principles.

We find two things, the *Atman* or the Divine Principle in us, and the *jivatman*, the embodied soul which is the ego. The ego is called the soul and the *Atman* is called the Soul of souls. The ego is bound in the chain of law of action which is known as the law of cause and sequence. The *Atman* transcends all actions and their results. We should remember that every action produces a reaction, and ordinary men perform actions or duties in the hope of their results. But *Sri Krishna* says that clinging to results brings death or destruction. So those who aspire to get the Divine knowledge of the *Atman*, should perform works without seeking or thinking of the results, doing work for work's sake.

We have said before that ordinary men work for the hope of results. The *Swami* says as to why we are known as ordinary? Because we are living on the ordinary plane of selfishness. Selfishness is ignorance and bondage. So he who has risen above the plane of selfishness, will reach perfection. Perfection is our ideal, so we should attain perfection to unfasten the chain of ignorance.

The chapter VII deals with *Method of Attaining the Highest Knowledge* (*Gita*, III). *Swami Abhedananda* says that knowledge is of two kinds, phenomenal and transcendental—sense and supersense—lower and higher—relative and absolute, though essentially it is one. The knowledge of the relative

objects does not satisfy our mind, does not bring permanent comfort, whereas the Absolute knowledge brings eternal bliss and happiness, and unfastens the chain of nescience (*agnana*)

Srī Krishna describes in the third chapter of the *Gita*, the method by which supreme wisdom can be obtained. There are two methods of attaining absolute freedom, and they are Jnana Yoga or practice of discrimination and knowledge, and Karma Yoga or practice of selfless work—'*lokesmin dvividā nisthā* \* \*'. If we think ourselves as the *Atman*, which is above the material body, senses, mind, and intellect, if we can constantly hold that thought that we are not the doers or performers of both mental and physical acts, but are above all actions or activities, then our mind is purified, and we are free from the bondage of the world of *samskaras*. Now, those who do not realize that absolute truth or *Atman*, but believe in the Divine Being as the Ruler of the universe, can direct all their works towards the almighty Being and can offer the fruits of their works. These are the method of Karma Yoga. Jnana Yoga is the method of discrimination or *vichāra*. In Jnana Yoga, a man discriminates what is wrong and what is right (*neti, neti vichāra*), and realizes the immortal *Atman* through right knowledge.

Knowledge has been divided into right knowledge and wrong knowledge. The wrong or false knowledge is known as *bharama* or *bhranti*. This wrong knowledge is the cause of *samsāra*, because it deludes men with false idea. Men take a rope as a snake for wrong or false knowledge. For wrong knowledge men consider the changing world as permanent. Sankara called it *adhyāsa*, and *adhyāsa* creates *mithyā-pratyaya*. The right knowledge comes through discrimination and dispels the darkness of wrong knowledge. This wrong knowledge is natural (*naisargika*) and eternal (*ananta*), but it dies out and appears as non-eternal (*sānta*) when right knowledge dawns. The method of attaining highest knowledge, is to correct the wrong knowledge or error.

The *Gita* says that bondage comes as the result of desires, and it is the nature of mind that vibrates. Vibration occurs for desires which can be said to be the modifications (*vr̥ttis*) of the mind. Srī Krishna says that nature creates habits and tendencies which instigate and compel a man to do work (vide

*Gita*, III 4-5) Now, what is nature? Nature is the habit of repeated efforts for thinking and doing. Habit manifests in two ways, affirmatively and negatively. The impressions (*samaskaras*) of constantly thinking and doing of works create habit and counter-habit. The counter-habit may be called the negative attitude which reduces the habit into its simplest form and thus corrects the habit and turns its course towards the Divine Being. So long sustained habit cannot be removed or rectified by the counter-habit. We are habituated to wrongly think the changing world as permanent, and the opposite right thinking, creates the counter habit which brings correction of error and makes a man free from bondage.

Christ said "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God". Swami Abhedananda says that purity of heart is the precondition of God vision, and that purity comes when we perform works with a view to please the Almighty Being and not to satisfy selfish purposes. The aphorisms, II 42-45 describe the Vedic ceremonial works which bring heavenly bliss and happiness. Swami Abhedananda says that when we are attached to ritualistic parts (*karmakanda*) of the Vedas, we are inclined to some extent to satisfy our selfish purposes, because the Vedic ceremonial functions make us stay in heavens for a certain length of time, but at the expiration of that time, we come back again to the phenomenal world which is changing and non-eternal. So Sri Krishna advises us to shun the desires for attaining heavens or *lokas* which are not permanent, and to nourish the desire for the emancipation of the bondage of *samsāra* or *anana*. Now, those who have succeeded in meditating upon the true nature of the self, have realized the state of blissfulness, happiness, and peacefulness. Whenever any disturbance comes to our life, if we can go above that state, shutting ourselves off from the external world and the conditions and turmoils, we can attain the blissful and peaceful state which is true and real all the time.

The chapter VIII deals with *Performance of Work and Control of Senses* (vide *Gita*, II 52-58). The Swami says, there is a difference between happiness and pleasure. Happiness comes in the peaceful state of mind, and when the mind is not disturbed by anxieties, or not distracted by desires for pleasure, the state of happiness comes. In fact, pleasure is

phenomenal and changing, whereas happiness is heavenly or Divine and unchanging

The Hindu Scriptures say that when real and divine happiness comes, a man is known as *sthitaprajna*, i.e., he whose *prajñā* is attained and steady. Both the *Upanishad* and the *Gita* ask as to what is the condition or state of a *sthitaprajna*? Swami Abhedananda says that a *sthitaprajna* attains *samadhi*, and sees the Spirit that pervades the whole universe. "So when your mind is not at all disturbed by any other thought or idea, that is steadiness (*sthitāvasthā* or *samadhi*). Then you forget the pain of the body." A *sthitaprajna* lives in this world of cares and anxieties, but is absolutely detached from them. He lives as a witness or *sākṣi*, looking down upon his mind from above, and the thoughts and ideas are just bubbling up. That will make him see what is the difference between the mind and the *Atman*, between the unreality and the reality. Therefore, we shall have to withdraw the senses like a tortoise, controlling the mind and rising above thoughts and ideas and being in tune with the Divinity which is dwelling within us and is shining all the time like the guiding star.

The chapter IX deals with *Self Mastery or Self-Control* (vide *Gita*, II 60-70). In the *Bhagavad Gita*, the last few verses of the second chapter treat this subject of self-mastery or self-control. The *Katha Upanishad* (II 1-2) says "*parāṇchi khāni vyotīmat svayambhuk*", etc., i.e., the powers of the senses to see, to hear, etc., are great. They drag the mind out to the external objects and not to the inner Self, etc. Now, it is our duty to see, to shut off our senses to those which are outgoing and to concentrate them to the *Atman* which shines in the heart, animates everything of the body and senses, and concentration will enable us to rise above the sense of duality and delusion, and will make us free from the cycle of births and deaths.

The *Gita* says, that self-control consists in the control of the senses and also in the control of mind which directs the senses. Now, if the mind be kept under absolute control, then all the senses are controlled, and the controlling of the senses means the transformation of the senses into consciousness which is the real essence of the self. The veil of ignorance covers the supreme Reality of the universe, which is like

night to worldly-minded people, because they do not think of this Reality. Now, those who are living on the sense plane, are awake in that state, but the wise man does not live there, and, consequently, it is like night to the wise man.

The path of knowledge is sharp like a razor's edge, and as it is difficult to walk on a razor's edge, so it is difficult to walk on the path of knowledge or wisdom (vide *Katha-Upanishad*, 13-14). But yet we should not be discouraged and unmindful to discriminate what is right and what is wrong, we must not be careless to control our senses and mind, and we should not be lazy to adopt the methods of concentration and meditation, so as to enter into the state of *samadhi*, where eternal silence and bliss reign.

The chapter X deals with *Work for the Divine Being* (vide *Gita*, II 72, III 1-18). The Swami says that when the mind is concentrated and purified, we get self-control and peaceful attitude of the mind. We should work for the service of the Almighty, and that work is described in the third and fourth chapters, where Karma Yoga and Jnana Yoga have been explained. The fifth and sixth chapters of the *Gita* have explained Sannyasa and Dhyāna Yoga.

In the second chapter of the *Gita*, where Sankhya Yoga has been explained, Sri Krishna says that the soul or *ātman* is, in reality, immortal, eternal and unchangeable, and it is non-different from the all-pervading Spirit. In the second and sixth chapters of the *Gita*, beginning with the seventh and ending in the twelfth ones, we find discrimination regarding the true nature of the soul. In the last six chapters, we find the result of discrimination, how the individual self can be known as the universal Self. The establishment of this self-accomplished fact "Thou are That"—*tat tvamasi* is given in the last six chapters, but, of course, in each of these last six chapters, there are the descriptions of different Yogis and different kinds of knowledge, etc.

Sri Krishna says "To work thou has the right, but not to the fruits thereof, and there he described Karma Yoga or the path through devotion to work. Again when Sri Krishna describes the nature of one whose knowledge is steady in wisdom, he does not mention anything about devotion to work, but describes wisdom and says that the path of know-

ledge or wisdom is highest, and that knowledge or wisdom is greater than *Karma*, 'therefore take refuge in wisdom'

Performance of work without seeking results is known as worship of God. It is an inevitable law that men cannot stay without work. When a man renounces his social work, he is not free from action, but he does action in another form. So, as we are bound to do work, we will work for the good of the humanity at large. But a man who has renounced the works and duties of life and who has ceased from performing physical works and, at the same time, whose mind is constantly thinking of the objects of senses, that self-deluded man is a hypocrite—'*ya āste manasā smaran, mithy-āchārah sa uchyate*'. It should be remembered that until and unless you realize, the *Atman*, until and unless your *ajñāna* is sublated by the divine higher *jñāna*, i.e., *atmajñāna*, you cannot renounce work, and it is also a fact that after attaining Divine knowledge, when a man is free from all bondage, he performs also actions, and he performs actions without any self-interest and for the welfare of the human society. A realized man never becomes lazy or actionless, but he lives in the world of action with dynamic effort and will.

The world is full of thorns, so control your senses and mind, and be the master of yourself. Putting on shoes of patience, having firm determination and self-confidence, march onward towards the realization of the World-Soul, and perform works without attachment to the objects of senses, nay, do works for the welfare of all kinds of living beings.

The chapter XI deals with *Wise Men and Their Works* (vide *Gita*, III 20-35). In the twentieth verse of the third chapter of the *Gita*, Karma Yoga, i.e., philosophy of work is discussed. It has already been said that when work is selflessly done without the longing for result, then work is known, as Karma Yoga or philosophy of work. Wise men know the secret of work. Now, who are the wise ones? The wise men are those who perform good works not for their own selfish motive, or to gain anything, but do works for the welfare of the mankind. The real wise ones are they who attain highest wisdom. They are not wise with their book knowledge or intellectual knowledge, but with tran-

scendental Brahman-knowledge They harmonize their individual will with the universal will The wise men perform their duties, although they have no duties They take upon themselves the idea of duty in order to set an example, so that others will follow them and will make their life fruitful and divine The wise ones can separate the knower from nature, and they know the real nature of the knower or *Atman* (vide *Gita*, III 27-28)

Swami Abhedananda says that the word 'nature' includes the aspects, physical, mental, and spiritual Kapila said in the *Sankhya*, nature is composed of three *gunas*, *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas* These are different expressions of different powers, but these powers cannot exist independent of one and unique substance, *Purusha*, which is the foundation of the universe Common people are entangled in the charm of the *gunas* and their activities, but the wise ones remain free from them

Sri Krishna further says that love and hatred—light and shade—are the greatest enemies in the path of spiritual progress So, knowing them as enemies and obstacles, we must strive hard to overcome them and transform them Blessed is he who overcomes his enemies, and tries to get out of the wheel of good and bad—love and hatred—action and reaction, and do all works under the direct command of the Divine Being, the *Atman*, who shines in his body and also in atoms and molecules of the universe

The chapter XII deals with *Mind and Self-control* (vide *Gita*, III 36-43) In mythological religion, we find two things, virtue and sin (*pāpa* and *punya*), and merit and demerit (*dharma* and *adharma*) Sin is known in the Western theology, Satan or Satanic power This idea of sin is found mostly in Christianity The ancient Jews did not know this idea It is said, this idea of sin rose first in Persia, when Ahura Mazda, the creator of all good, was in constant fight with Ur, the creator of all evil The Ur was known as Satan The idea of sin or evil was accepted during the Babylonian Captivity, and afterwards it was taken up along with the Christian rituals Afterwards St Paul accepted this theory of sin and preached among the Christians the doctrine of Devil or Satan St Paul did never see Christ, but, it is said that he once

saw Christ in his dream (ecstatic vision ?) In India, we find this idea of sin and virtue in the Epics, and the law of cause and sequences was connected with it

Now *tamas* is known as sin or darkness, as it covers *sattva* or virtue. As, in darkness, we take a rope as a snake, so, in *tamas*, we lose our discriminative power and take unreality for reality, body for *Atman*. From *tamas* quality originates *kama* or desire. This *kama* or desire is called *Mara* or Satan. Lord Buddha, when sat in deep meditation in the bank of Nānjanā, was tempted by *Māra*, and not only Buddha, but every spiritual aspirant who sits for meditation for quietening the mind, confronts *Māra*. This *Māra* is the *pāpmā* or *pāpa-Purusha*, i.e., Evil one, who is destroyed by the Hindu Sadhakas when they worship daily their deities. This *Māra* or *pāpmā* or *kāma*, i.e., desire takes the form of anger when it gets obstruction. Sri Krishna says that desire and anger (*kāma* and *krodha*) are the principal enemies in human life. So we should control desire. Swami Abhedananda says that there are different methods of controlling the enemies like desire and anger, and among them, four are the principal ones, *sama*, to make peace by amicable settlement, *dāna*, to offer something to the enemy so that he will not do injury, *bheda*, to divide the enemy and rule, and *dama* or *danda*, to punish the enemy.

It should be remembered that fire is not extinguished by pouring butter, but water is necessary to extinguish the fire. Similarly, desire cannot be mitigated by desire, but desirelessness (*avrittī*) is necessary for extinguishing the fire of desire (*pravrittī*).

Sri Krishna further says that the mirror of mind is covered with dust or dirt, so dust or dirt should be removed to purify the glass of the mirror. Similarly, our soul is covered with hundreds and thousands of desires. Desires are like a cloud that covers the soul, the intelligence, or the spark of light dwelling in each soul (vide *Gita*, III 38). When the mirror of mind or consciousness is covered by the dust of desires, we lose the proper recognition of truth, or lose the nature of things, then we are subject to ignorance. This state of forgetfulness is worse. So we will have to discriminate and have right understanding to recognize our real entity, the *Atman*.



Mind vacillates, and it is not constant. Mind is that which has thoughts, desires, and doubts as to whether I will do this or that, and doubting or vacillating faculty is known as mind. *Buddhi* is another faculty of *antahkarana* or internal organ. *Buddhi* is that understanding or discrimination which ascertains this or that. *Buddhi* can be said to be a faculty which first cogitates, then decides. It ascertains which is wrong or right, and really helps us to determine the real nature of our soul.

It will be wise to live like a witness without coming under the control of desires or motivated thoughts. We will have to detach ourselves from the will-o'-wisp of desires, which create *samsāra* and bondage. We will have to get freedom, throwing aside all kinds of dualistic sectarian creeds and religions, and that is the true aim of life.

The chapter XIII deals with *Practice of Jnana Yoga* (vide *Gita*, IV 1-10). In the *Upanishad*, two paths are described, one is the path which leads to success and prosperity of the individual, and the other leads to that which is unchangeable and eternal, i.e., one is *karma-mārga* and the other is *jnana-mārga*, or one is *pravṛtti mārga* and the other is *nivṛtti mārga*. In the Vedas, we find the mention of *karmakanda* which prescribes sacrifices and rites and *jnana-kanda* prescribes *śhravana*, *manana*, and *nididhyāsana* which are accompanied by *vichāra*. In ancient Egypt, China, and Persia, we find no thought of renunciation, whereas in India, the ancient Seers of Truth taught the doctrine of renunciation. Renunciation means giving up selfish desires and performance of works without asking results. To teach this doctrine of renunciation, Incarnations of God appear in human form, perform *sādhana*s, and set examples of their selfless works and intense longing for emancipation or *mukti*. Sri Krishna says in the *Gita*: "Though unborn, the imperishable Spirit, which is the Lord of all beings, presiding over my own nature, I manifest myself through the mysterious power of *maya*" (*Gita*, IV 6). In other words, the Divine Incarnations descend on earth to rescue the devotees and show them the path of emancipation. In order to understand the divinity of God, we will have to feel divinity within ourselves first, because if our spiritual eyes are not open, we

misjudge and mistake the divinity in a human form. The practice of Jnana Yoga helps us to open our eyes and to see God within our heart and also in all beings, sentient and insentient.

The chapter XIV deals with *Path to Salvation* (vide *Gita*, IV 11-15). The outlook of the *Gita* is universal and very liberal, because it does not prescribe any marked path. It knows that men are possessed of different tastes and temperaments, so it teaches through Śrī Kṛṣṇa: "Whosoever comes to me through whatsoever path, I reach him. All men are struggling in different paths which ultimately lead to me, whosoever worships God in whatsoever form, and with whatsoever deeds, receive the objects of his desires" (IV 11). Here Śrī Kṛṣṇa says by the words 'I' and 'Me' the immortal *Atman*. He says that a man can realize the *Atman* through any *sādhana*, and when he realizes it, he makes himself free from the chains of *samsāra* forever and ever. The Swami says that God grants unto us all things that we want, and He fulfils our desires and prayers not through partiality or through grace, but through the law of cause and sequence.

In the fourth chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita*, the division of caste system has been mentioned and four classes were divided according to qualifications and powers (*'guna-karma-vibhagashah'*). But this division is meaningful only in the human society, which is bound by time and space as well as by law of cause and sequence, but where there are no time and space and law of *karma* the caste system bears no meaning. The soul or *Atman* is not limited by any division or law, but it transcends all which are subject to *maya* or nescience. The soul or *Atman* may be compared with a lotus leaf and the will-power or desire, with a drop of water. The drop of water does not touch the leaf at all, although it is in it. Similarly, will-power which is compared with *maya* or *mayasakti*, dwells in the Divine Being or *Ivara*, but at the same time will-power or *maya* does not affect or disturb the Cosmic Being. Ordinarily we think that the *Atman* or Brahman is contaminated with *maya*, but, in truth *Atman* or Brahman is above *maya* or nescience. It is pure, unique, and one without the second. It is our duty to realize the *Atman* and to go beyond *maya* and *samsāra*.

The chapter XV deals with *Work for Work's Sake* (*Gita*, IV 16-23) ŚRĪ KṚṢṆA explains the natures of action and inaction (*karma* and *akarma*) *Karma* is known as proper action, and *akarma*, improper action. These two words bear superior meanings, as action signifies all phenomenal activities, and it is found that even in the midst of inactivity, there can be found something which is absolutely inactive.

The Vedic actions or sacrifices and rites are ruled by positive and negative injunctions which are known as *vidhi* and *nisheda*. Improper actions are those which are prohibited, and proper actions are allowed for the sacrifices. But ŚRĪ KṚṢṆA means to suggest, that kind of action does not bring unto us freedom or emancipation of the soul from the bondage of mind, body, and attachment to the world. But we will have to live in this world of actions and will have to perform works or duties, we cannot avoid works or duties, but the question is as to what is the right way of doing works, which will not bind us in *samsāra*, but will make us free from *maya*.

But before doing works we will have to determine the purpose and highest goal of our life. The Scriptures as well as the wise ones say that body is mortal and the *Atman* which resides the body, is immortal. It is our goal to realize that immortal Principle to cut asunder the eternal chain of birth and death. ŚRĪ KṚṢṆA teaches to accomplish all works through the spirit of worship, and that means to annihilate the egohood (*āmitva*) of the individual soul and to realise the universality of the *Atman*. It is the path of *Karma Yoga*. There are other paths like the paths through devotion (*Bhakti Yoga*), discrimination (*Jnana Yoga*) and concentration and meditation by suppressing or transforming the mind to its causal or simplest form (*Raja Yoga*). Therefore, *karma* which means activity, includes all devotional feelings, discrimination, intellectual activity, mental activity, and sense activity. Ordinary people performs works with the hope of getting results, but the *Gita* says that the results of works bind men in the den of delusion, so we will have to work for that means which will emancipate us from all kinds of bondage. The striving for *mukti* will not bind us in the *samsāra*, but will make us free. So the natures of actions are not the same, as some

bind and some emancipate the souls Śrī Kṛṣṇa forwards a solution and says "He who sees inaction in action and action in inaction is the wisest of all mankind" (vide *Gita*, IV 18) That is, he who ascertains that there is no activity in the actionless *Atman*, and thinks that men through ignorance impose the idea of action upon the *Atman*, is wise

Now, the secret of work as well as of life is this that if we constantly feel himself as the unchangeable Reality and as Knower and Witness, our mind or soul will never be attached to the fruits of works, because attachment to the fruits of works proceeds from the sense of 'I' and that sense makes us limited. Therefore we will have to resign our own individual will to the will of the Lord of the universe, then our will or mind will be in tune with the universal Soul, and all egoity or sense of 'I' or delusion will be replaced by the all-knowledge *Atman*.

The chapter XVI deals with *Divine Being is Dwelling Everywhere* (*Gita*, IV 24-32). Swami Abhedananda says that sin and virtue exist as long as we think of ourselves as the limited beings, but from the concept or vision of divine vision or Divinity, there is neither virtue, nor vice, but everything seems as relative and delusive.

We conceive of God in two ways: one, we think of Him as personal, and secondly, we take Him as impersonal. God with name, form, and qualities, is known as personal or determinate, but He is really above all names, forms, and qualities, and even the categories or adjuncts (*upādhis*) of determinateness (*saguna*) and indeterminateness (*nirguna*) should not be imposed upon Him. Those who perform sacrifices, good works or penances, to realize Him, will ultimately come to know that He shines everywhere and in everything, and is non-different from us.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa relates different kinds of sacrifices in the verses, 4-25-32, and that description relates to Raja Yoga. Patanjali prescribed eight kinds of Yogic *sādhana* (*astanga-yoga*) for restraining the mind, and laid stress upon concentration (*dhāraṇā*), and meditation (*dhyāna*). Concentration means fixing attention upon some part of body, or upon some chosen object or deity, for a certain length of time, and the efforts to concentrate is known as habit (*abhyāsa*). Meditation

means concentrated attention, and when thoughts, desires, passions, and sense-perceptions are in abeyance and the mind is fixed upon the ideal, and is one with the ideal, it is called *samādhi*, or the state of superconsciousness. In meditation, there is a continuous unbroken current (*tailadarāvat*) of the mind and when that thought-current is all-converged towards one idea, it becomes *samādhi*. There are mainly two kinds of *samādhi*, *samprajñāta* or *sa uṣā* and *asamprajñāta* or *nirvya*. In the *samprajñāta-samādhi* the knower, the known, and knowledge (*jñāta*, *jñeya* and *jñāna*) exist, and in the *asamprajñāta-samādhi*, there remains no *vritti* and exists only the pure consciousness (*sanmātra-jñāna*). This existent knowledge is the real essence of the Seer or Knower, i.e., of the *Atman* (*svarupa-drasta*). In Vedānta, it is called Brahman, which is the background of eternal existence, eternal knowledge or consciousness, and eternal bliss (*Sat-Chit-Ananda*). The state of *Sat-Chit-Ananda* is known as determinate (*saguna*) Brahman, whereas the stateless, causeless, and groundless pure consciousness is known as indeterminate (*nirguna*) Brahman. Therefore, in Vedānta, we find two states of the World-Soul, *saguna* and *nirguna*, but, in truth, the Brahman is above all qualities, categories, and adjuncts. This is the viewpoint of Advaita Vedānta or non-dualistic Vedānta. The statement of qualified non-dualism and that of dualism are different.

The *Yogadarshana* divided the state of mind into five, disintegrated or scattered (*kshipta*), dull and stupid (*mudha*), agitated (*vikshipta*), one pointed (*ekāgra*), and absolutely confined with the higher Self (*niruddha*). Patanjali prescribed *pranayama* to control the breath (*prāna-lāya*) which causes activity in mind or makes mind to vibrate. Next process is *pratyāhāra*, i.e., repeatedly (*prati*) act of drawing and concentrating the mental current to some chosen object (*āhāra*). Then come *dhūranā* and *dhyāna*, i.e., concentration and meditation. Commonly that which is known as *dhyāna*, is the dual process of *pratyāhāra* and *dhūranā*, real type of *dhyāna* comes when the mind is completely silenced and remains concentrated upon the chosen object or deity (*Istha*) in an unbroken way, and immediately after *dhyāna*, *samādhi* comes. *Samādhi* is a state of the complete absorption, and, in *samādhi*, the *Atman* is realized in its real nature or essence.

In the fourth chapter of the *Gita*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa mentions about two kinds of sacrifices (*yaṇa*), *karma-yaṇa*, performance of offering oblations on the blazing fire of sacrifice, and *jñāna-yaṇa*, i.e., sacrifice of wisdom, i.e., *neti, neti vichara* with the help of *mahāvākya*. The *jñāna-yaṇa* is prescribed by Advaita Vedānta. In *jñāna-yaṇa*, ultimate goal of human life is reached and there nothing remains other than Divinity Itself.

The chapter XVII deals with *Brahmarpana-Karma-Yoga* (*Gita*, IV 29-42). The *prāṇa vāyu* is known as the vital-energy, and is source of other breaths *apāna*, *samāna*, *vyāna*, and *udāna*. *Pranayama* is a kind of sacrifice. There are various kinds of *prāṇāyāma* or method of controlling the breath, and the *Gita* mentioned about four kinds of them.

(१) अपाणे जुहति प्राणम्, (२) प्राणेष्वपि तथापर, (३) प्राणपानमती

रुद्धा, (४) प्राणन् प्राणेषु जुहवति (*Gita*, 4 29-37). In the Hatha Yoga *sādhana*, we find that *trātoka-yoga* has been prescribed, and it is a method of elongating tongue so as to close the hole at the roof of the mouth, and the Yogis say that by this method, the Yogis drink the nectare (*amṛita*) that flows down from the thousand-petalled lotus (*saḥasrārā-padma*), the seat of Parama-Siva, to perpetuate his mortal life. But this method is not accepted by Vedānta. There is another kind of Yogic practice which is known as *pavana-svarodaya-sādhana*, i.e., the method of controlling the breath in different flexes (*chakras*) residing in the spinal column, so as to visualize the psychic powers and their results. These are also known as sacrifice (*yaṇā*). Śrī Kṛṣṇa says that sacrifice of wisdom (*jñāna-yaṇā*) is the best and highest one and is better than *dravya-yaṇā* or sacrifice of external objects (*Gita*, 4 33). This *jñāna-yaṇā* unfolds the mystery of the *Atman* which is actionless and immortal. Swami Abhedananda says that as long as we are in the realms of mind and intellect, and also in the realm of activity, so long we cannot attain the knowledge of the *Atman*. For attaining the knowledge of the *Atman*, we should take help from a realized person, because he is the best guide and knows the best method of attaining. We mistake matter for spirit and spirit for matter. Therefore, to get the supreme

knowledge we shall have to correct our error or wrong knowledge. Wrong knowledge deludes us, and right knowledge assures us with the guarantee of getting *Atman*-knowledge.

Swami Abhedananda says, there are two methods of realization of the Divine Self: one is to see everything in the true Self, the *Atman*, and the other is to see everything in God. Any how we shall have to see God, the Absolute face to face, and this direct or immediate knowledge of the *Atman* or Brahman, is *aparokṣānubhūti*. We ourselves have made our own state of bondage, so we shall have to unfetter that bondage by right knowledge of the *Atman*. This *Atman* is the Purushottama of the *Gita*, and is the Brahman of Vedānta, though there lies some difference between the status of Purushottama and that of Brahman.

While explaining this chapter, Swami Abhedananda says that the aspirants and seekers of knowledge should make their thoughts harmonize with works, and should try their utmost to strike off the fetters of false knowledge, so as to realize their real nature which is changeless amidst all changes. God fulfils all prayers if they are sincere and earnest. Our duty will be to first of all clear our mind from doubts and then to fix it upon the ideal of work for work's sake. The false belief along with false or wrong knowledge is ignorance. It happens for non-discrimination between the real and the unreal,—between the soul and the material body. We should remember that falsity is the denial of truth, and body is the garment of the soul, so we should give up the wrong notion or idea about the *Atman* and should realize the *Atman* that shines as the *śarīra* or the Lord of the body, as well as of the universe.

Chapter XVIII deals with *Two Paths: Jnana Yoga and Karma Yoga* (vide *Gita*, V 1-3). The question is whether we ought to renounce all actions, or to be devoted to actions. From the Vedic time down to the times of the Great Epics, the Hindus divided the earthly life into four, student (*brahmacharya*), house-holder (*grihastha*), retirement (*vānaprastha*) and absolute renunciation (*sanyāsa*). That social custom has now been entirely changed. Now there is only two *ashramas*, *grihastha* (house-holder) and renunciation

(*sanyasa*) The forest life was a preparatory one for taking the vow of renunciation. At present the monks who renounce their home and hearth for rendering service to the mankind as well to their emancipation, observe two vows of *brahmacharya* and *sannyāsa*. In the Buddhistic time, there were *Shramanas*, and they were the *Bhikkhus* (monks) and *Bhikkhunis* (nuns). Their life was a life of dedication and pure celibacy.

Swami Abhedananda says "Christianity in the form of Protestantism does not preach that ideal. The Catholics took it and explained that ideal through the Eastern religions. In Judaism, this ideal (of *sannyāsa*) was never known, because the ideal of Judaism was no other than earthly prosperity \* \* Judaistic ideals are very strong among the Protestants of today \* \* The Roman Catholics have some ideals higher than those of the Protestants, because they learned a great deal from Buddhism. Roman Catholicism is nothing but Buddhism in a different form, and is an improvement upon Judaism. In Mohammedanism, you do not find that, as they have inherited the Judaistic ideals of earthly prosperity. The Sufis<sup>1</sup> got the ideal of absolute renunciation from Hinduism and Buddhism. India is the only country which gives rise to the ideal of renunciation and absolute freedom. Buddhism has its mother religion in Brahmanism or Hinduism, or religion of Vedant<sup>2</sup>. Swami Vivekananda says that Buddhism is the rebel child of Hinduism.

The *Gita* has explained action and inaction in truest sense, while it says "He who sees inaction in the midst of activity and activity in the midst of inaction, is the real knower of truth and the true worker" (*Gita*, IV 18). The *Gita* means *inaction* in respect of the *Atman* who is above and beyond all activities. Action means the activities of body, senses, mind, and intellect, because these are the instruments of (subjective) thought and (objective) activity. Now, how is it possible to know this secret of action and reaction? The *Gita* says through renunciation (*sanyāsa* or *tyaga*) we can know it. The purification of mind brings renunciation in one's life, because when the activities of mind are quietened, mind shines in its own nature, the consciousness, which helps to catch the glimpse of the *Atman*, and removes all impurities like anger, hatred, jealousy, egotism, and selfishness from mind. Between



two paths, Jñāna Yoga brings renunciation and eternal peace unto men, and Karma Yoga brings purification of mind as well as dedication to God that makes possible to work for work's sake, i.e., to work without asking any result

The chapter XIX deals with *Real Indifference or Non-Attachment* (vide *Gita*, V 6-13) The moment a man realizes God, the Absolute or *Atman*, he is above all bindings and attachments Real indifference and non-attachment are one and the same Swami Abhedananda says "Through Karma Yoga one can also attain that knowledge of understanding that if works are done not for any selfish motive, but for the purification of the heart or mind (*chittashuddhi*), then purification of heart brings the enlightenment of the *Atman* or Brahman" Advaita Vedanta says that after the realization of the Brahman all things other than Brahman vanish means a realized man lose the changing and transitory nature of all the phenomena and sees actionless transcendent reality of the Brahman He sees all the phenomenal world and its objects, sentient and insentient, are covered, i.e., saturated with the all-conscious Brahman Then real indifference (*anāsakti*) and non-attachment or renunciation (*sanyāsa*) come, and in that state he feels that the body is like the house and the soul is the master of it, the servants are the senses, and intellect is the chief attendant, and sees that although this body moves, the dweller of the body does not move, because he is above and beyond all activities, thoughts, and ideas

The chapter XX deals with *God is Impartial and is like a Witness* (vide *Gita*, 5 14-20) God is impartial, because He has no rival, because He is raised above duality and shines as one without the second God is like the sun which shines equally upon the virtuous and the sinners—upon the sentient and the insentient But through ignorance (*ajñāna*) men think God as partial

Now, what is ignorance? Vedanta says, ignorance or *ajñāna* is not an absolute nothingness or void or negation, but it has an existence (*yat kinchit iti vadanti*) which is inexplicable (*anirvachanīya*) As it is inexplicable, it is not existent (*sat*), not non-existent (*asat*), and not existent and non-existent (*sadasat*) at the same time Ignorance or *maya* has two powers (*śakti*), covering (*āvarana-śakti*) and throwing, i.e. identifying unreality

or falsity with reality or truth (*vikshepa-sakti*) When *ajñāna* is removed by the realization of the Brahman, it vanishes with both of its powers, i.e., then *mayā* or wrong knowledge is corrected by right knowledge, and the knower of the Brahman rests always in the Brahman

In this chapter, the Swami has thrown sufficient light upon the theory of *ivanmukta*. We have seen in the *Chhandogya-Upanishad* (8.12.1), the saying '*asharīram vāṇa santam na priyāpriye sprishataḥ*'. Regarding it, while explaining the *Brahmasūtra* (1.1.4), Sankara said as to whether that state of liberation is attained in this life, or in the next? \*\*

—शरीरे पतितेऽशरीरत्वं स्यात्, न जीवत इति चत्। To this he said that the state of liberation is attained in this very life, when this world of phenomena appears as unreal, and although the body exists after realization, the realized man is not attached to it (न, सशरीरत्वस्य मिथ्याज्ञाननिमित्तवत्। \* \* सशरीरत्वस्य जीवतोऽपि बिदुषोऽशरीरत्वम्)।

Now, the condition of a *ivanmukta* has beautifully been explained by Swami Abhedananda. He says "The real knower of the absolute Truth sees the same Spirit, the all-pervading Being, in all diverse states and sees also the diversity and through the diversity he realizes the unity, because his insight penetrates the surface of everything and every being, and goes to the bottom." Now, it should be remembered that after God-realization the diversity (i.e., world-appearance and its beings) does not reduce to nothingness, but it exists as unreal, or as surcharged or pervaded by the Brahman. Sadananda Yati gave an illustration of it and said that a boy who walked with his father, saw the elephants made up of clay and took them as living and real, while his father being an experienced man, laughed at on hearing the words of his child and took the elephants as earthen and unreal. So after God-realization the world appears to the *ivanmukta*, but the *ivanmukta* sees it and feels it as unreal, or takes it as non-different from the Brahman-*chaitanya*.

The chapter XXI deals with *Desires brings Attachment and Pain* (vide *Gita*, V 21-24). The *Gita* puts a question, what happens to one who attains Godconsciousness, and it

answers that after God-realization, the enlightened man's mind is peaceful and undisturbed by the modifications, Gautama Buddha conquered Māia means he conquered the mind with its desires and thus transformed his mind and attained Nirvana, which is a positive something. In Vedānta, we also get the word Nirvana, i.e., Brahma-nirvana. The *Gita* also says *sa yogi brahma-nirvanam brahmabhūto dhigacchati* (V 24). There is nothing in this world which can be compared to that happiness felt in *brahmajñāna*. Swami Abhedananda explains five kinds of pain or *klesha*, *avidyā*, *asmitā*, *īkāṣā*, *dveṣa*, and *abhiniveśa* (nescience, egoism, attachment, aversion and love for life). These five *kleshas* are the obstacles to the attainment of God-realization. These can be controlled or transformed by discrimination (*vichāra*).

Doubt is also an obstacle. Swami Abhedananda says that the Brahman state (*brahman-bhāva*) cannot be obtained by him, whose mind is always disturbed by doubts. So doubts should be removed by faith and belief. As hate is conquered by love, so doubt can also be conquered by love, or attraction towards God or *Atman*. Love-cum-attraction towards God removes impurities of mind. Then mind becomes purified, and the purified mind catches the undying light of the Brahman.

The chapter XXII deals with *A True Sannyāsi and a Yogi* (vide *Gita*, V 27-29, VI-14). The last three verses of the fifth chapter describe the method of realization through meditation (*yoga*), and the sixth chapter contains the explanation of the three verses, which are like aphorisms. The *Gita* says, shutting out the external contacts of the senses \* \*, i.e. *sparśhān kṛtvā*, etc. (V 27-28). In meditation, we will have to withdraw our senses and sense powers from the external objects, and should fix our eyes between the eye-brows, i.e. in *añjā-chakra*, making the breathing slow and imperceptible almost, and when the mind is concentrated in *añjā-chakra*, think the *Atman* and be in tune with the *Atman*, and then that identity of the lower self with the higher will bring emancipation. The breathing process depends on the mental activity, so when mind will be quietened and concentrated, the breathing will automatically be

checked. And it should be remembered that checking of breathing exercise is secondary, and primary thing to stop the activities of the mind, and when mind is stilled, it is transformed into consciousness and bliss, and then a Sadhaka enjoys eternal peace.

The chapter XXIII deals with *Purified Mind is Our Real Friend* (vide *Gita*, VI 6-15). The *Maitani-Upanishad* said "*mana eva manusyanām kāraṇam bandhomoksamoh Bandhūya viśayāsaktam muktamravisayam smṛitam*", i.e., mind is both friend and foe or is the cause of both emancipation and bondage. Mind is friend or cause of emancipation when it is devoid of selfish desire, and is foe or cause of bondage when it is entangled in selfish desire. Śrī Kṛṣṇa also says in a similar way (vide *Gita*, VI 5). Swami Abhedananda says that a lack of self control and self-subjugation is the condition of the souls being inimical to ourselves. So if we wish to be spiritual, we should learn to make our mind friendly by purifying it. The appearances of the things or objects delude us, so we must go to the bottom and see what the real nature there is.

Now, who is a true Yogi? Śrī Kṛṣṇa says that a true Yogi is he whose soul or mind is controlled with the blessings of wisdom and self-realization of Truth. A true Yogi is called a saint to whom a lump of clay or stone and a piece of gold appear as the same (vide *Gita*, VI 8). This example we find in the life of Ramakrishna Paramahansa. A Yogi remains contented in his life. Śrī Kṛṣṇa describes the state and *sādhana* of a Yogi in the *Gita*, VI 11-13. The practice of Yoga in its true perspective brings peace and tranquility which culminates in Nirvana.

The chapter XXIV deals with the *State of a Self-realized Yogi* (*Gita* VI 16-32). Moderation or middle path (*madhyama-pāthā*) is to be observed in our life. In the verses VI 16-17, the *Gita* has discussed about food to be taken because good foods create good nature in man. The vegetarian food is more suitable for the practice of Yoga. Swami Abhedananda says, that days of the Epics have passed, and in this age of science and reason, Śrī Ramakrishna prescribed to any kind of food which suit the physical condition of a man and is easily digested. But we should learn to control our tongue

for, not to talk too much, as it causes waste of energy. For the practice of Yoga, energy must be conserved. The conservation of energy helps a Sadhaka to concentrate and meditate upon the *Atman*, who resides in the core of the body and also in atoms and molecules of the universe.

Sri Krishna says to abandon all worldly desires to rest upon the Brahman (*brāhmisthūti*). Resting upon the Brahman means to realize the Brahman. Our mind goes to different objects, so we will have to draw back the course of the mind for concentrating it upon the *Atman*. There are many obstacles in the path of Yoga. We shall have to overcome those obstacles to get into the core of the *Atman*. Sri Ramakrishna said to know God first, and then everything will come to us. The Upanishad says, '*ekasmin vyñāte sarva-vyñātam bhavati*'. So we will have to commune with God to realize the all-consciousness *Atman* and to cut asunder the knots of nescience (*ajñāna*).

The chapter XXV deals with *Practice and Dispassion are Necessary* (Gita VI 33-36). A silk worm builds its own cocoon and there it is imprisoned, and time comes when it gains the power of cutting and gets out of it and then it comes out as a beautiful butterfly. So the individual human soul is imprisoned in the cocoon of this physical form, and feels imprisoned, and unhappy, but when the latent higher tendency of the soul is roused, the soul struggles hard to get out of this prison, the wings of wisdom and divine love begin to grow and the soul flies away above the mundane world, and soars high in the atmosphere of spiritual space and comes to the throne of the supreme *Atman* and enjoys eternal bliss and happiness.

The material body is a limitation of the soul, as it keeps him tied down to the material plane. A silk-worm builds its own cocoon and there it is imprisoned. But the time comes when it gains the power of cutting and gets out of the prison of the body. Freedom from limitation is necessary for enjoying eternal peace.

Eternal peace and happiness are not obtained until and unless the mind is controlled. Desires are the cause of disturbance of the mind. So desires should be curbed by discrimination, by comparing the effects, and by watching the

results which we have already obtained. Constant struggle is necessary to keep the mind under control, i.e., for quieting the tumult of the mind. Habit and disinterestedness (*abhyāsa* and *vairāgya*) are necessary, and practice and dispassion have been prescribed both by Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Patañjali. Śrī Kṛṣṇa further says to struggle in the first place to form our ideal and to think that ideal as divine. An ideal is not a creation of our imagination, for spiritual eyes are opened when we are conscious of our real ideal and struggle hard for realizing it. God does not help us from outside, but helps the struggling men from inside, i.e., God helps residing in the heart and inspires them to get into the kingdom of perpetual peace and knowledge. Therefore, we must try to follow the path of the great ones who have been enlightened.

The chapter XXVI deals with *A Yogi is Never Lost* (vide *Gīta*, VI 83-47). The mind is restless, because the various impressions that are in the mind, constantly bubble up and produce new desires, making us go headlong towards the fulfilment of our selfish desires, and gradually we become slaves to those desires and also to them which arouse those desires. By habit we can reduce the number of the desires. Now, what is a habit? Habit is nothing but a series of impressions that we have derived from the continuous performance of certain acts. Patañjali defined habit as *tatratyāgobhāsaḥ*, i.e., *tyāga* or effort is known as practice or habit (*abhyāsa*) when it is done repeatedly. Habit is also known as the second nature. Waldo Emerson said that habit can be overcome by counter-habit. Counter-habit is also an impression, and it is created in the negative way, or in denying process. It is an opposite tendency that directs the habit to an opposite direction.

There are two kinds of restraint: one is by force and the other is by gradual practice, instead of sudden practice of control. Sankarā said in his commentary (*bhāṣya*) on the *Gīta* that mind has a very close relation to breath, so mind can be controlled by the method of *pranauyama*. Further we need self-conviction or self-confidence. Self-confidence is that power which brings faith or confidence upon the existence and true nature of the self or soul, which is non-

different from the universal Soul or *Atman*. We should remember that our consciousness depends upon our true self, nay, our consciousness is inseparable from the universal Self or immortal *Atman*. The world is like a walking shadow, so we should go deep into the bottom of the world upon which the world-surface changes, and that bottom is the changeless *Atman*.

A true Yogi is he who communes with the *Paramatman*, the highest consciousness. But the ordinary Yogis who practice Yoga, sometimes slip from their *sadhana*, but such Yogis who have fallen from the path of God-consciousness, may be born in the families of Yogis who are wise and attain God-realization, and thus they attain the highest realization in the next incarnation.

Now, he is a true Yogi, who has become free from the chain of births and deaths which are the outcome of nescience or *ajnana*. Sri Krishna says that a true Yogi is superior to a man of austerity. He is greater than a man of book-learning knowledge. He is also greater than those who perform good works. So the lovers of highest knowledge must be a true Yogi, who is both a *Bhakta* and a *Jnani*. Sri Ramakrishna said, pure love and pure knowledge are one and the same.

The chapter XXVII deals with *God is in Everything and Everywhere* (vide *Gita*, VI 47—VII 6). Here begins the seventh chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita*. In the first to sixth chapters, explanation of true nature of the *Atman* has been given. In the next six chapters, i.e., from the chapters seventh to twelfth, description of God has been given. Swami Abhedananda says that in these chapters Sri Krishna has shown the germ of *Bhakti Yoga* (vide the *Gita*, VI 47 and VII 1). Now, what do we mean by *bhakti*? *Bhakti* is a constant remembrance of God with intense love. The true devotee is one who has fallen in love with God. Sri Krishna says that a true devotee will have to his whole heart and soul fix on Him (i.e. God), and in this state the devotee forgets his separate entity and his soul and heart are tuned with the Infinite. While explaining *Bhakti Yoga*, Sri Ramakrishna used to say that intellectual knowledge is just like a stranger who enters the outer apartment only, but true love

enters into the inner chamber of emancipation (*'bhakti muktiṁ andanamahat paryanta yete pāre*) In fact, love means attraction (*anurāga*), which brings two souls together and make the two into one Śrī Krishna also says "Take refuge in me, and I shall make you free" Further he says,

सर्वधर्मान् परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं ब्रज ।

अहं ताम् सर्वपापेभ्यः मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः ।

Here concentrated attention and full resignation to God are prescribed, and when the devotee fully dedicates his individual will to the cosmic will of God, God rescues him from the ocean of *samasāra*. So the Swami says "When you feel that which is infinite and yourself is a part of the Infinite, you have realized and not until then" And when God-realization comes, we know everything (of the universe) and nothing remains unknown to us

Swami Abhedananda has discussed here the theories of Sankhya, Nyaya, Vaishesika, and Vedanta. He says that Kapila (of the Sankhya) explained that *Prakṛiti* coming in contact with the all-intelligent *Purusha* created this universe, i.e. the universe with its objects which was unmanifested, was manifested. Kanada (of the Vaishesika) explained that atom (*anu*) is the cause of creation of the universe. That is, when two atoms are combined and manifest as molecule (*dvyanuka*) and molecules are combined and are formed into triad (*trasarenu*), they act and creation begins. The Swami says "The philosophers of India believe in many kinds of atoms, solid, liquid, and gaseous. These atoms, i.e., finer states of atoms are called elements \* \* The ancient Hindu scientists did not know the 74,015 elements which you know now. There is a tendency to make these elements increase in number, but standard of knowledge of the Hindu scientists was the five-sense perceptions \* \* There are eight different things of this material nature, which are the material cause of the material forms: first, the solid, second, the liquid, third, the gaseous, fourth, the elements of heat and fire, fifth, the elements of ether, sixth, the thought power or force, seventh, the reasoning, and eighth, the egoism. These eight make up the external or gross physical and mental phenomenal world (*Prakṛiti*) \* \* In the Sankhya philosophy, we find twenty-four



different elements, and these are mentioned in the Raja Yoga and other books on the Sankhya philosophy”

Now, wherever there is expression of life, there is soul. This soul is the part of the Universal Soul. Ramanuja called the soul the part of the World-Soul or God, but Advaita Vedanta called the soul, non different from the World Soul or Brahman. In fact, the beautiful manifestations of the world are held together in garland with the thread of the World-Soul. This Universal Soul is the Supreme Spirit which saturates and animates all the universe and its objects.

The chapter XXVII deals with *A Seer of God is a Liberated Soul* (vide *Gita*, VII 7-19). We have learnt that there are two natures, one is the cause of the material phenomena, and the other is called the animal or living soul. The first one is the lower nature of the Divinity, which is the *Prakriti*, and the other is the superior nature of the *Prakriti*, and the combination of these two makes up the phenomenal universe.

But there is a cause of this phenomenal universe and God is the cause. Vedanta says, God the Absolute or Brahman is the real cause, and from the supreme Brahman everything of the universe, sentient and insentient, evolved without any effort. The Brahman is both material and efficient (*upādāna* and *nimitta karana*) cause. Some of the schools of Vedanta say, that God is only the efficient or instrumental cause, whereas material cause is different from the Brahman. But Advaita Vedanta does not admit this view, and says that, in the truest sense, the Brahman, i.e., indeterminate transcending Brahman is neither a cause, nor a ground, but from the viewpoint of evolution or projection (*srsti*), the determinate Brahman is conceived as both cause and ground, for forwarding a plausible solution of the problem of evolution.

Now, God has also been conceived as an all-pervading Principle, being immanent and resident in Nature. Sri Krishna says in the *Gita*, '*mattah parataram nānyat kinchī dasti*', i.e., 'there is nothing else higher than I, as different pearls are tied in a thread, so everything is interlinked with me'. Swami Abhedananda has described the mystic word OM (*Pranava*) as universal, as it pervades all the sounds and

letters OM is recognised as the all-pervading cosmic sound. It is a fact that sound is a vibration of air, and when it is analyzed still farther, it can be traced to the vibration of ether or *ākāśha*. But vibration is an activity which is the outcome of power or energy, and OM being the all-pervading sound, is also conceived as the all-inclusive sound from which generate all sounds, all speeches, and all forms.

SRI Krishna says '*vijam, mam sarva bhūtānām* \* \*', i.e. 'I am the eternal seed of all beings, and this eternal seed is the intelligent of the intelligent and the energy of the energetic.

*Prakṛiti* or primordial Energy is composed of three qualities, *sattva*, *rajas*, and *taṃas*, and the phenomenal universe has come out from the three states of these qualities. God is the witness (*saksi*) of these qualities, and it proves that God transcends three qualities and their states, which are known as *maya*.

SRI Krishna says 'the charming *maya* belongs to me, it deludes, but who takes shelter in me, he transcends *maya*'. Sankara said that *maya* is the inscrutable power of God—'*paramesha-sakti*'. This means, Vedānta says, the causal *anāṇa*, constituted out of hundreds and thousands impressions (*samāskaras*) of all beings and objects, co-exists with the Brahman, but the Brahman is not affected by *maya*. As the determinate (*saguna*) Brahman or God is associated with causal nescience or *maya*, so *maya* is attributed to God, and *maya* is known as the power of God—'*paramesha-sakti*' and SRI Krishna says '*mama maya duratyayā*' (VII 14). *Maya* being the attribute or quality, the Brahman and even God is not contaminated with it, they are all the time above of it. But some scriptures say, *maya* belongs to the Brahman or God, so as to consider the Brahman or God as the prime substance or essence. Besides, the Vivarana School (of Vedānta) admits the Brahman as the support (*pratisthā* or *adhisthāna*) of *maya* (*brahmāśrita maya*), so he who takes refuge in the Brahman or God, crosses the ocean of birth and death.

Now, the question arises as to who takes refuge in the Brahman or God? SRI Krishna says, four kinds of men take refuge in Him, and they are *ārta* (distressed), *ṭi-ṭnāsu*

(aspiring), *arthartı* (seeker), and *jñāni* (wise) The wise are called the Mahatman, because the wise ones see and feel God everywhere and in everything, and are devoid of passion and attachment

The chapter XXIX deals with *Purified Souls reach the State of Superconsciousness* (vide *Gita*, VII 20-30) People worship God through various desires, but most of them do not worship the highest and true kind of God So purification of mind is necessary to discriminate the real from the unreal The bright spirit is not the supreme God, the Devas or various deities are not the supreme God, although God dwells in them There are India and other *Devas*, and they have forms But it should be remembered that the supreme God, the Creator, has no particular name and form, so He can be worshipped under any name and through any form Sri Krishna says "Transitory is the fruit obtained by such men of poor intellect who worship other deities leaving the eternal Truth or Divinity" So we require proper understanding and insight to know who is the supreme Deity or Divinity The wise men love God simply for God's sake without having any selfish desire, and that love is the highest and lasts forever and ever

There is a great difference between an ordinary mortal and an Incarnation of God An ordinary mortal gets his body and manifests himself as the resultant of his previous works, but is not subject to the law of cause and effect, so there but is not subject to the law of cause and effect, and there lies the difference We should have our spiritual eyes open before we know the real form of the Divinity We should know that we are the immortal children of the eternal God But as long as our mind is working on the plane of relativity or *maya*, so long we will not be able to know God's real essence So purification of mind is necessary to rise above the plane of relativity and to live in God Really the purified souls reach the state of superconsciousness In the state of superconsciousness, there is no relativity, no attraction of senses, no earthly attachment, and where the soul is illumined with the light of wisdom, there comes the state of eternal peace and blessedness Sri Krishna says "After many births, the wise one realizes Me (the

*Atman*) and feels the presence of the Divinity everywhere. Such a high soul is very rare in this world, and he is a true *Mahātman*" (*Gita*, VII 19)

The chapter XXX deals with *The Absolute can be realized by the Yoga* (vide *Gita*, VIII 1-10). This eighth chapter begins with seven questions: (1) What is the nature of the universal Spirit, (2) What is the Self, (3) What is action, (4) What is declared to be the region of the material, (5) What is divine, (6) Who is He, who is the director of our works in the body, and the work which we do with our minds and bodies, and (7) What is the nature of that director, and how at the time of death art Thou to be known by the self-controlled (vide *Gita*, VIII 1-2)?

These questions naturally give rise to the vital question as to what is the nature of the Brahman, and what is the nature of our soul within us and soul in actions? Now, this knowledge of discriminative enquiry rises in him who is purified in mind or heart, as has been discussed before. Sri Krishna says in the *Gita* that the all-pervading Absolute dwells in all the individual beings in the form of soul, self or ego. But the soul or ego is contaminated with delusion or *maya*, whereas, the Absolute transcends it. In fact, delusion or *maya* is the dividing category that divides the individual soul or ego from the universal *Atman*. So we will have to go beyond this category, and then the undivided and universal Essence will reveal in itself. In Vedānta, all the living souls are called the children of immortal Bliss—'*amṛtasya putrāḥ*'. So by birthright we are the immortal *Atman* or Brahman, but we forget ourselves for *maya* or *avidyā*.

Now, what is the cosmic Ego? It is the sum total of all individual egos, and is, in reality, beyond relativity, though the cause of relativity or *maya* co-exists with it. It is commonly believed that the cosmic Ego is the originator and governor of the cosmos, but the cosmic Ego is conceived in Vedānta as both *Iśvara* and *Hiranyagarbha-Brahmā*. In *Iśvara* the seeds of evolution of the cosmos remain sleeping or unmanifested, whereas they are awoken or manifested in *Hiranyagarbha-Iśvara*. So the conception of *Iśvara* or God is in dual form, *avyakta-Iśvara* or *kāraṇa-Brahman* and *vyakta-Iśvara* or *kārya-Brahman*. Sri Krishna uses the words, *Akshara*,

Parama-Brahman, Svabhāva, Adyātma, Visarga, and Kāma for the cosmic and divine Being (vide *Gīta*, VIII 3) Akshara is known as the Parama-Brahman Adhyātma means the soul which exists in every living being and in everything, and becomes the enjoyer (*bhoktā*) of the fruits of all works Svabhāva means the individual soul which is no other than the *Atman*, but it takes the form of the individual soul or Jiva for *maya* and remains as a part of the Whole or Brahman Visarga is oblation of materials of butter, wheat, cake (*puṇodāsha*), etc (vide the commentary of Madhusudana Sarasvati on the *Gīta*, VIII 3) All perishable objects are known as *Adhuhuta* Hanyagarbha-Brahmā is known as *Adhudevātā*, which is known as the presiding deity God or *Atman* is known as *Adhyajna*, which means the conductor of the sacrificial works (*yajna*) There are many deities or divinities, but the source and supreme deity is God, or the *Atman*, which is unchangeable and immortal The heavens (*svargas*) are impermanent, and the permanent substance is the attainment of Godconsciousness or *mukti* Prayer is necessary for attaining *mukti* Prayer is the act of earnestly asking of a thing That kind of prayer is supreme and divine which brings communion with the immortal *Atman*

God is considered as the universal poet and His poetry is the cosmos (vide *Gīta*, VIII 9-10) Madhusudana Sarasvati called God, the Kavi or *krānta-darshina* When the mind is purified and enlightened, knowledge of the Divine Kavi comes, and delusion is removed forever and ever

The chapter XXXI deals with *Akshara-Brahma-Yoga* (vide *Gīta*, VIII 11-22) The *sloka* VIII 11 is similar to the *sloka* I 2-15 of the *Katha-Upanishad* The indestructible one, the *Atman*, is spoken of thus by the Seers of the Vedas, and He is seen or realized when the mind is purified and senses are controlled That One is meditated that the medium of OM or Pranava (vide *Gīta*, VII 12-13) Here Śrī Krishna explains both *krama-mukti* (gradual march towards emancipation) and *jivanmukti* or *sadya-mukti* (emancipation attained in the life-time) through Yogic or Vedantic *sadhanā* Śrī Krishna says whoever constantly thinks of my eternal being with a one-pointed mind, I am accessible to him (vide *Gīta*, VIII 14) Now, going to heaven and attaining to Divine realization

are two different things, as one is perishable and the other is imperishable and eternal. The *brahmaloka* means the region of Brahman which is not eternal, and so the real Sadhakas do not wish to go to heaven, but aspire to attain the knowledge of the *Atman*.

The *slokas* VIII 17-19 describe about the days and nights of Brahman and also about his nature and greatness. The *Gita* says that men approach God, the Perfection, gradually through the states of minerals, animals, human beings, and at last commune with the all-consciousness and all-intelligence *Atman* and then their journeys are completed.

The chapter XXXII deals with *Highest Goal is reached by the Yogi* (vide VIII 26-28). The Yogis develop a power of giving up bodies at their will, and this is a kind of Yogic *siddhi* which is inferior to highest *siddhi*, known as the freedom from the chain of delusion. There are two paths, bright one (*dakṣiṇa-mārga* or *devayana*) and black one (*vāma-mārga* or *pitruyana*, the path of the departed ancestors). The *Gita* says "Fire-light, day-time, bright fortnight and six months of the northern solstice—going by this path, the knowers of the Brahman reach the absolute Truth" (*Gita*, VIII 23-24). From the commentaries of Sankara and others, we come to know that Agni and Jyoti are the deities. Besides them, Ahah and Shukla are also the deities of the day and bright fortnight, and Uttarāyana is the presiding deity of the northern solstice. Similarly, Dhuma is the deity of smoke or cloud, and Rātri, the deity of night. The *Brahmansutras*, IV 3 1-4) and *Bṛihadaranyaka Upaṇishad*, VI 2-15, also described Archi, Ahah, etc. The Yogis and Jnanis pass by the *devayana* or the path of the light and enter into the abode of eternal happiness. Vedanta does not admit these *lokas* (regions) and the presiding deities of the *lokas*. Vedanta says that men enjoy good or bad fruits of the good or bad deeds they perform, and these results are the cause of creating these *lokas*. The Yogis who know the secret of fruits of merit and demerit, transcend the *lokas* and reach the abode of the absolute Truth. They do not wish to remain slaves to petty individualities, bondages, environmental conditions and mental attitudes, but manifest fully their individualities, and make themselves free and perfect.

2

The chapter XXXIII deals with *God is the Witness of the Process of Works* (vide *Gita*, VIII 1-10) In the eighth chapter we have learned how one meditates upon the supreme Deity, the Purushottama Now, the ninth chapter begins, and in this chapter we will study the nature of that Deity and knowledge of its nature, which brings salvation unto us with a direct and immediate divine consciousness

Knowledge is of two kinds, direct and immediate, and indirect and mediate The direct knowledge or *atmajñāna* is the secret of all secrets It is called the *rājavidyā* With the awakening of the *rājavidyā* or *guhya-vidyā*, *karmas* accumulated during many thousands births, are destroyed Motivated *karma* is the product of *ajñāna*, and it causes *ajñāna* The senses of I, Me, Mine, and *ajñāna* or *brahma*, but when we identify I, Me, and Mine consciousness with the supreme consciousness *Atman*, we are not involved in the trap of *ajñāna* In truth, selfishness is ignorance or *ajñāna*, and when we purify our mind with the light of discrimination, ignorance is replaced by knowledge, *avidyā* is sublated by *vidyā* or *jñāna*

Space, time, and causation are *ajñāna* Intelligence is finer than space and time The material body is an extension in space, and the essence of extension is intelligence Again intelligence and knowledge are inseparable The moment we begin to think of intelligence or knowledge, we rise above sense-perception, above mind, and above intellect and then we will find the source of the phenomena The absolute Brahman is the source of the phenomena Now, how does evolution of the phenomena happen? The germ of life remains latent in the *Prakṛiti*, the undifferentiated consciousness Sri Krishna says "Presiding over my own *Prakṛiti* or nature again and again, I project all animate and inanimate objects which are also subject to the laws of nature (vide *Gita*, IX 8) So *Prakṛiti* creates means *Prakṛiti* borrows its energy and intelligence from the Absolute, and then she creates, and, therefore, the Absolute is the source The Absolute creates the universe and its beings with the medium of *Prakṛiti* or cosmic Energy But Advaita Vedānta says that the absolute Brahman being raised above *māyā*, does not create and destroy anything, and it is God, the Hiranyagarbha-Isvara, who creates means projects

everything from within. But the *Gita* advocates determinate (*saguna*) *Isvara*, and so it says through Śrī Kṛṣṇa "I do (create the universe being unattached to the act of creation)" (vide *Gita*, IX 9, and vide also the glossary of Anandagiri). Again in the tenth *sloka*, the *Gita* says "Guided by my eternal energy, I produce the phenomenal universe and this is the cause of evolution of the world." The *Gita* believes that the Supreme Spirit, or God the Absolute, is the director and projector and starter of the process of evolution.<sup>1</sup>

The chapter XXXIV deals with *Atman is the Source of Everything* (vide *Gita*, IX 11-25). The *Gita* says, that Incarnation of God descends on earth in human form to save and teach mankind, and to show the path of righteousness, and to establish the path of true religion (vide *Gita*, IV 7). All the nations believe in an Incarnation of God. Śrī Ramakrishna said, an Incarnation is like a solid mass of ice that floats on the ocean of creation. Water solidifies for the coldness of *bhakti* of the devotees. God incarnates in human form, and ordinary people do not recognise Him as an Incarnation for their delusion or non-knowledge. Śrī Kṛṣṇa says that the Mahatmas worship Him with love, and that love is true love for the Divinity. Swami Abhedananda says "Through love one can attain the same goal, as it is attained through *jnana* or knowledge. Because, in the truest sense, love (*prema*) and knowledge (*jnana*) are one and the same, and Śrī Ramakrishna Paramahansa said it again and again." Śrī Kṛṣṇa says that others worship Him through the sacrifice of wisdom (*jnana-yajna*). *Jnana-yajna* is in the form of *neti-neti-vichara*.

There are three kinds of worshipper. The *first* one is he who worships God in his own soul. He repeats *so'ham*, i.e. 'I am not the individual egoistic soul, but is the supreme Soul, the Brahman.' This worship is performed through *Jnana Yoga*. The *second* one is he who worships through a medium like OM or some deities, and the *third* one is he who worships God through some phenomenal manifestation,

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<sup>1</sup> Vide *Cosmic Evolution and Its Purpose*, where Swami Abhedananda gave a rational and scientific explanation of evolution of the universe.



ie through fire or light or some other manifestations

In olden times, different kinds of sacrifice were in practice, and the horse-sacrifice or *ashvamedha-yajna* is one of them. The sacrificers would kill the horses, and would dip the flesh of the horses in Soma-juice and offered them in the tongues of the fire. The two verses, IX 20-21 have said about the *Soma-yajna*. But these sacrifices were motivated with some purposes, and so the sacrificers of wisdom (Jnana Yogis) condemned them, and said that real emancipation (*mukti*) comes through discrimination by destroying *ajnana*, which deludes men and women. There is another path to emancipation, and that is dedication (*sharanāgati*) or complete surrender to God.

The chapter XXXV deals with *Religion of Vedanta is Universal* (vide *Gita*, IX 26-34). The *Gita* says that Bhakti Yoga is also a highest kind of practice as well as philosophy. There is also Karma Yoga which teaches that when work (*karma*) is done without any selfish motive, emancipation comes, because selfless works purify the minds.

We should believe that we all are living in eternity, and we are the pure and eternal souls. We are neither distinguished by names and forms, nor by any particular caste or creed. We are not the Brahmins or Kshatriyas, or Sudras, but are the universal Brahman, and our sanctified divine identity is lost for delusion. So spiritual practice is necessary for removing delusion and for revealing the true nature, which is the Brahman. Repeat the words *Eternal Truth* and you will get a glimpse of it. The glimpse will come into fullness, and you will realize that you are the immortal and eternal soul.

The chapter XXXVI deals with *Lamp of Wisdom dispells all Ignorance* (vide *Gita*, XI-11). Sri Krishna says " \* \* Neither the highest gods and angels, nor the great souled saints and sages, know my origin (*prabhavam*), \* \* He who knows me as beginningless, birthless, and deathless, is emancipated from all sins" (*Gita*, XI-3). Truthfulness, self-control, fearlessness, contentment, and charity, etc, should be practised. Worship through love is necessary, but we should acquire knowledge which leads to that worship. Sri Ramakrishna also said about *jnanamushra bhakti*, ie devotion accompanied by knowledge or *vichara*, otherwise blind

devotion is valueless. Rituals and ceremonials are good and helpful as long as they help us in gathering our thoughts and stringing them together, so as to elevate the power of sensation and raise the mind above the worldly plane. Good and bad—merit and demerit—purity and sin—are relative terms, and, therefore, they have no real entity. It will be our pious effort to go beyond the sense of duality which is the outcome of delusion (*ajnana* or *maya*). We should try to harmonize religion with science and philosophy, and as it is the age of science and reason, so we should discriminate and analyse everything with the help of scientific reasoning. We should not shun the world, but should live in the world thinking ourselves as the child of Immortality. God, or Brahman, saturates everything, and every atom and molecule of the universe are suffused with the spirit of the Divinity. So we should live in the ocean of the Divinity, considering us as part and parcel, nay non-different from the universal Reality. We should not have to wait until after death, but should enjoy that everlasting peace and tranquility in this mundane life.

The chapter XXXVII deals with *Everything is the Manifestation of the Lord* (vide *Gita*, X 12-42). Swami Abhedananda says that this tenth chapter has described the wonderful transfiguration of Sri Krishna. In the eleventh chapter, Sri Krishna has shown that He is not limited in the body, but is all-pervading (*Visvarupa*). Now, to realize God or Brahman as all-pervading is a very difficult thing. It requires the opening of the spiritual eyes. But yet we shall have to realize His greatness and divinity. Patanjali prescribed for this reason the symbol OM for meditating upon the nameless and formless indeterminate (*nirguna*) Brahman. Swami Abhedananda says: "If you are to meditate on the omnipotence of God, you will have to repeat mentally 'omnipotence', and then thought and name will go together and you will form a picture of omnipotence in the mind." \* \* Name and form are the symbols. The ideal picture is a symbol." In the *Upanishad*, we find the idea of symbol-worship. The symbol is the medium, and through the medium we can appreciate the real deity or essence. God or Brahman is the essence of our existence, the Soul of our souls, the essence of our being. "Mind is one of

the symbols through which God, the infinite absolute Spirit, could be realized and worshiped '.

Sri Krishna says 'I am the knowledge, I am self-knowledge'. In fact, knowledge and Self are one and the same thing, but yet we say knowledge of the Self. Knowledge may be known as a knowing process, and when it conveys process or activity, it is recognized as phenomenal, but true knowledge is devoid of tripartite principle, *jñātā*, *jñāna*, and *jñeya*, and this non-relational knowledge is the Self-knowledge. When Sri Krishna says, 'I am the knowledge, I am self-knowledge', knowledge conveys both the phases, phenomenal knowledge and Divine transcendental knowledge. The *Atman* or Brahman-knowledge is processless transcendental knowledge, and *maya*, or delusion is removed by this Divine transcendental knowledge.

Noise and silence are two opposite things. Noise brings disturbance, whereas, silence brings balance and peace. Swami Abhedananda says 'Those we cannot observe silence have no knowledge of religion and also no realization of spiritual life. Silence about all secrets is the wisdom of the wise, and all wisdom comes in silence. Mystic Flaccas said to Maister Eckhart that God whispers to ears (of the devotees) in silence. Patanjali prescribed Yoga for bringing silence to the mind by suppression (*niruddha*). Vedanta teaches to bring silence in the mind by the process of discrimination or *vichara*. Silence helps the mind or intellect to appreciate the Brahman.

The chapter XXXVIII deals with *All Pervading Form of God or Visvarupa* (vide *Gita*, XI 1-55). God the Absolute is all-pervading, as the *Isha-Upanishad* says in the first mantra "*Ishā vāsyamudam sarvam*". In fact, God, the Absolute or Brahman is both formless and with form, is determinate as well as indeterminate. While explaining the chapter XXXVII of his book, *Bhagavad Gita*, Swami Abhedananda says "God, according to universal religion of Vedanta, is both personal, impersonal, and beyond both, and also is dwelling in all beings" (vide p. 593). These words of the Swami sing the universal song of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, as Ramakrishna said, 'the Brahman is both *sākāra* and *nirākāra*—*saguna* and *nirguna*, it becomes the twenty-four *tattvas*, and is more than

these Both the doctrines of Swami Abhedananda and Sri Ramakrishna are non-dualistic (Advaita), but this non-dualistic doctrines of them are quite different from the doctrines as expounded and upheld by Sankara, Ramanuja, Nimvaika, Srikantha as well as different from the doctrine as expounded by Tania

In the eleventh chapter of the *Gita*, Sri Krishna has shown his all-pervading divine form, so as to remove the doubt and ignorance of Arjuna This all-inclusive form of God the Absolute is perceived, i.e., realized also through God's grace (*anugraha*) Arjuna also admitted this grace of God '*madanugrahāya paramam* \* \*' (X 1) In the *Katha-Upamshad* (I 2-23), it is also said '*yamevaisha vrinute tena labhyah*' etc., i.e. 'who is fit or competent to see Him (God) or to attain Divine knowledge, God receives him or Divine knowledge (*ātmanjana*) is revealed to him Here *anugraha* or divine grace appears as the precondition of God-realization But Swami Abhedananda has told the utility of self-effort (*purushakāra* or *yatna*) for attaining realization

The Swami says, the *Bhagavad Gita* has two sides the one is universal and the other is mythological The universal side can be applied during the life-time of our individual self, no matter where we are and to what nationality we belong The mythological side is connected with the traditional or historical event which was handed down to us at the time of the *Mahabharata* Besides them, there we find in the *Gita*, two important sides, devotional (*bhakti*) side and knowledge (*jñana*) side The one would be emotional, and the other, intellectual, but both would be mixed together to make a harmonious whole, and then we will not be misdirected for ignorance

After manifesting the all-pervading divine form, Sri Krishna at last says to Arjuna "O Pandava, he who works for me, he who holds me as the highest ideal and is devoted to me and does not care for any other company or friends or relatives, and he who has no enemy and is kindly to all living creatures, \* \* comes to me and dwells with me forever and ever" The word "me" here signifies the supreme Divinity, which is the immortal *Atman* or immanent as well as transcendent Brahman. Thus *Atman* or Brahman is

described in the *Gita* as Purushottama

The chapter XXXIX deals with *Resignation brings eternal Peace* (vide *Gita*, XII 1-12) Swami Abhedananda says that the same impersonal eternal Truth, or the absolute Reality, appears as personal God. So personality and impersonality are the relative attributes, and have no transcendental (*pāramāthika-sattā*). The nature of attribute is to bind, to limit, and to delude. God or the Absolute is not subject to any attribute and, in reality, He or It transcends them all. And so when we find that Śrī Krishna uses the words I, Me, and Mine, they signify the essence and real existence of God or the *Atman*. The Swami quotes the *Gita*, where Śrī Krishna says

He who works for *me*, regards *me*, as the Highest, is devoted to *me* and is free from all attachments, and he who is not unkindly to any creature, attains to *me* in the end—referring by *me* to the personal God, who is worshipped under different names and forms \* \* That Divinity, of which Śrī Krishna was the manifestation, had no particular name like Jehovah or Allah” Śrī Krishna asks Arjuna to be devoted to that (universal) form. The Brahman can become a human or personal God in order to satisfy the desires of the devotees.

What do we mean by *upāsana*? *Upāsana* means worship and that means holding the ideal before the spiritual eye. It requires no external ritual or ceremony, but it means to approach to the highest ideal and to commune with it. Swami Abhedananda says that worship in the form of *upāsana* is the close relation of the soul to God, the divine Ideal.

Now, what is religion? Swami Abhedananda says that which makes one spiritual, as well as makes one realize the Supreme Being and the relation which the individual soul bears to that Being, is religion. Religion of India has a specific character, as it is all-pervading and flexible. Religion of India, and especially Vedantic religion, recognises both the aspects of God, personal and impersonal. The *Gita* has preached the worship of personal God and Śrī Krishna says it to be the better one. “Because greater is the struggle of those who fix their thoughts upon the unmanifest, the impersonal, and the absolute, for the goal of the unmanifest and the impersonal God can with great difficulty be also attained by

the embodied mortals' "Here we get the reason" says the Swami, 'because whenever you try to fix your thoughts upon the unmanifest, you will have to withdraw your thoughts from the manifested body' The manifested body is the material thing, and withdrawal of the mind from the material body requires an immense power of self-control and self-abnegation. We will have to kill attachment to the body and senses, and will rise above the plane of physical consciousness, and will land in the plane of the Absolute which is the surpassing or transcending supreme consciousness. We should remember that attraction of the flesh drags down to the plane of nescience or *maya*, whereas attraction of the spirit takes us to the planeless plane of the absolute Brahman.

Now, who is the Saviour? He who saves the life of a drowning man, is called the Saviour. God saves us from the ocean of bondage. He incarnates in the form of Avatara or Perfect Man. Sri Krishna says

ये तु सर्वाणि कर्माणि मयि संन्यस्य मत्पराः ।

अनन्येनैव योगेन मा ध्यायन्त उपासते ॥

तेषामहं समुद्धर्ता मृत्युसंसारसागरात् ।

*Bhagavad Gita*, XII 67

"Such devotees whose whole heart and soul are fixed on me, I deliver from the ocean of death and misery, suffering, sorrow and evil' *Mṛtyu* or death is nescience and bondage. He who takes shelter in God, is saved by God. Through any kind of Yoga or spiritual *sādhana*, the devotees can reach God, can perfect him, and can commune with the supreme consciousness. But for reaching or realizing the essence of God, we must harmonize our words with thoughts, and must be sincere. We may practise discrimination, concentration, and meditation, but it should be remembered that desirelessness or sacrifice of results of works is better than them \* \*

"ध्यानात् कर्मफलसंशयान्मोहान्ति निरन्तरम्" \* \* \* \* (XII 123) We all live in the world of duties or works, so we are bound to do work. But duties or works should be performed in the sense of service to God, and then that attitude and process will purify our mind, will make the mind to receive supreme consciousness. So we should learn to resign ourselves to God to receive the blessing for attaining Godconsciousness.

The chapter XL deals with *Attainment of Godconsciousness is Universal* (vide *Gita*, XII 9-20). Perfection brings undying light of Godconsciousness or *brahmānubhūti*. Now, what is perfection? Perfection is a stateless supreme state where all bondages are torn off, all knots of desires are cut asunder, and highest ambition of Divine communion is fulfilled. There is one mind or mental current that is running through the vast universe, through the etherial space and solar sphere, and that is known as *Prakṛiti*, and when that *Prakṛiti* manifests itself through the individual soul, it becomes the individual mind. Therefore, there are two minds, one is the unlimited or cosmic mind, and the other is the individual or limited mind. Now, the terms 'unlimited' and 'limited' are relative, and beyond relativity, there shines one limitless substance which forms both unlimitedness and limitedness—cosmic mind and individual mind—*māya* and *avidyā*, and that limitless background or substratum is the Brahman. We all are approaching towards the Brahman and in time we will reach it and will commune with it, and that communion is *perfection*. Egotism and attachment to desires are creating obstacle to reaching the Brahman, so the *Gita* says to go beyond egotism and attachment, to purify the heart, and when the heart is purified, i.e., quietened, we receive inspiration to reach the Brahman, to commune with the Brahman, and to realize the Brahman.

In the twelfth chapter Śrī Krishna says to be kind to all and to be patient and restraint. He instructs us to be above all temporal affections, above hate and love, honour and dishonour, and pain and pleasure. Duality is bondage, whereas non-duality is freedom. It is said, 'what thou sowest, thou shalt also reap', so we should be restraint and modest. We should remember that what is potential, is made actual. We are potentially divine and perfect, we should, therefore, be conscious of it, and when we become conscious of it and bring it on the plane of consciousness, we will reach perfection, and then all knots of doubt will be cut asunder, and all our acts or duties will die out forever and ever.

The chapter XLI deals with *We All are Immortal and Indestructible* (vide *Gita*, XIII 1-4). There are two elements,

*Prakṛiti* and *Puruṣa*—*Kṣhetra* and *Kṣhetrajña*—*Jñāna* and *Jñeyā* This body is called *Kṣhetra* and he who is conscious of it, is *Kṣhetrajña* (vide *Gīta*, XIII 1) Sankara described two natures of God, and they are *parā* and *aparā* The *Prakṛiti* is known as *Kṣhetra* and *aparā* being the material cause of the world appearance, whereas God is known as *Kṣhetrajña* and *parā* Madhusudana Śaśvatī called the soul with material body, internal organ (*antahkārana*) and other material and mental things as *Kṣhetra*, and God as *Kṣhetrajña*, and Puruṣottama or the supreme Principle binds them and at the same time transcends them While explaining *Kṣhetra* and *Kṣhetrajña*, Swami Abhedananda writes that the world with its beings, sentient and insentient, is known as *Kṣhetra* or matter or object, whereas *Kṣhetrajña* is the Spirit or *Ātman* *Kṣhetrajña* is the nature of *vyāna* or consciousness and assumes the form of the manifold universe The *Kṣhetra* or individual soul takes bodies, lives in the world, gains experience on the material and mental or intellectual planes, and reaches God or universal Spirit

The chapter XLII deals with *Absolute is the Unknown and the Known* (vide *Gīta*, XIII 5-16) The mental and physical organisms and sense-powers are included in the field (*Kṣhetra*) and the indwelling spirit (*Kṣhetrajña*) is the ruler of this field Now, the unchangeable Reality of the universe, which is beyond personal God, and transcends the categories of time, space, and causation, is the Divinity or Puruṣottama, who is regarded as the source of consciousness, existence, and intelligence, bliss, and love Śrī Kṛṣṇa says "Five subtle elements (*pañca-tanmātrā*), egoism (*ahamkāra*) intellect (*buddhi*), the cause of egoism, unmanifested *Prakṛiti*, the cause of intellect, ten senses (*indriyas*), desires, hatred, physical constitution or body and its knowledge or consciousness and fortitude—all these changeable things are included in *Kṣhetra* or *bhūmi* (ground)' (*Gīta*, XIII 6-7) The *Gīta* says that the person who possesses good qualities like humility, freedom from vanity, non-killing of animals (*ahiṃsā*) forgiveness, straightforwardness, service to spiritual teachers, mental and physical purity, steadiness in spiritual path self-control and perseverance absence of attachments to senses and objects, absence of egoism, constantly finding in birth, death, old age,



sickness or disease \* \* and devotion to Me (*Atman*), etc., attains salvation or *mukti* (vide the *Gita* XIII 8-12) But it should be remembered that *mukti* or supreme knowledge of the *Atman* comes from within, and penance, book-knowledge, etc., are the means. Where ordinary philosophy ends, there begins the highest realization. Kant said that the Absolute (*mukti*) is unknown and unknowable, but the *Upanishad* or *Vedānta* says that it is known and realized as the innermost Essence. This Essence is not perceived by the senses, inner and outer, but yet the senses exist in and through that Essence. We also move and have our beings in it. It is the Soul of our souls. It is the unmoving and also the moving. It is far and near (vide the *Gita*, XIII 15-16), and at the same time all contradictions meet in it and it transcends all contradictions and disharmonies.

The chapter XLIII deals with *World beyond the Senses* (vide the *Gita*, XIII 7-22). *Maya* is the divine energy of God or Brahman (*paramēsha-śakti*). Philosophy and religion of *Vedānta* are based upon the idea of involution and evolution of the Nature or *Prakṛiti* and at the same time they teach the method of transcending them and of going in the core of them. The *Atman* shines in all beings and objects, it is undivided in essence, but appears as divided for the cause of *maya*.

Nature is the eternal energy of the supreme Being. Śrī Kṛṣṇa says that matter and spirit—*Prakṛiti* and *Puruṣa*—are two natures of God. *Prakṛiti* or *maya* is the cause of worldliness (*samsāra* or universe), and as *Prakṛiti* or *maya* associates with the Brahman, the Brahman is said to be the remote cause of the universe, though, in reality, absolutely transcends the categories of cause and effect. *Vedānta* says that worldliness (*samsāra*) or bondage happens as the result of identification of the reality with the unreality. It is known as superimposition or *adhyāsa*. When we realize the almighty God, the world appears pervaded by God and these false knowledge is removed and Divine knowledge is revealed. Now, what is the process of removing the false identification? Non-attachment and *sannyāsa* should be practised for removing the false identification. When non-attachment and real renunciation come, right knowledge dawns, and through right knowledge the false notion of the world or worldliness

vanishes, and then the world appears as the playful ground of the almighty God, then world appears as sucharged with the essence of the Divinity

The senses are the limitation and it limits the wholeness of truth or consciousness. Swami Abhedananda says "What we perceive and see through the limitation of senses (instruments), is *maya* or worldliness \* \* Truth can be found beyond the limit of the senses which are product of nescience (*ajñāna*) and we find it through (sense) intuition where there is no limitations of space and time" The knowledge of the Absolute is beyond space and time, i.e., beyond *maya*, and that knowledge is appreciated or realized only through higher intuition which is gained through the practice of Yoga

The chapter XLIV deals with *The Knower of the Brahman is Perfect* (vide the *Gita*, XIII 23-29). The *Gita* says that the Soul or *Atman* is witness (*saksi*). A witness is he who remains unattached from everything and at the same time sees everything. The ego is different from the *Atman* or supreme Spirit. The ego dwells in the body and is known as the *Jivatman*, but it owes its debt to the *Paramatman* who shines like the witness, the supporter, the sustainer and the experienter of the works and activities of the ego. The Swami says "When we have known this, we become free from birth and death. There are three paths to reach the Absolute and they are Raja Yoga, Jnana Yoga and Karma Yoga. There is another path and that is Bhakti Yoga. The devotees through devotion, reach the all-beloved God. Men can reach God even in this life, if they wholeheartedly strive to get Him.

The chapter XLV deals with *Discrimination between Kshetra and Kshetrajña* (vide the *Gita*, XIII 27-35). The nature and soul mean *Prakṛiti* and *Puruṣa* (of the Samkhya) and matter and spirit (of Vedanta). Matter is the object and spirit is the subject. In the phenomenal ground, the object and the subject form the body of the whole, the personal God. The Swami says "The individual ego does not produce the body without being subject to the laws of nature, while personal God produces the universe. The one is dependent, and the other is independent, the one is limited, the other is unlimited in power. But the Vedanta philosophy leads us beyond the idea of personal God. It leads us beyond the cosmic ego, and carries

is beyond nature in its primordial state and makes us realize the absolute source of intelligence, power and love. It carries us to a state beyond which no human mind, not even the cosmic mind, can go, because the mind is dissolved at the very approach towards the infinite. 'The mind is dissolved' means mind substance is transformed into consciousness, because when the limitless absolute Brahman-consciousness is realized, the mind, the product of nescience or *ajnana*, does not exist as mind or *ajnana* or darkness, but exists as shining consciousness.

The *Atman* or Brahman is known as *Sacchidananda*, i.e., *sat* or existence, *chit* or intelligence or consciousness, and *ananda* or bliss. These three are commonly known as separate from one another, but, in reality, these three are one and the same. These three are infinite and universal, and this universal nature of the *Atman* or Brahman is realized in *samādhi* or ecstatic vision. Swami Abhedananda has forwarded a reason for it, while he says: "Any mind substance is only a combination of matter in a higher state of vibration, but all these vibrations, higher or lower, are immortal and unchangeable part of the true nature of the soul, the *Atman*." In fact, mind, matter, universe, intelligence are the manifold manifestations of the one and same Brahman. Manifoldness are known by names and forms, which mean change or mere appearance, but the ground or essence is one without the second. Sri Krishna says: "O, Kaunteya, the supreme Self is beginningless and is free from all qualities, and though dwelling in the body, yet it neither acts, nor is affected by the fruits of words" (vide *Gita*, XIII 32). Beginning and end connote the idea of change and that means *maya*. The Brahman is beyond *maya*.

Swami Abhedananda has compared the Absolute with the changeless space. He says: "There are three kinds of space: one is external space, perceived by our senses \* \*, the other is mental space, and another is spiritual space. The spiritual space is the foundation of mental space, and that is the foundation of external space. Again a space has no change, while an object that exists in space, has change. The electric train moves upon the space, but the space remains unchanging. So though the Brahman is the ground of the changing phenomena, yet the Brahman does not change, but it is static.

and immute (*kutastha*) The absolute Brahman is the one immortal source of happiness, Śrī Kṛṣṇa says They with the eyes of wisdom realize the distinction between nature (*kṣhetra*) and the Spirit (*Kṣhetrajña*), and also the method of attaining to the emancipation from nature, reach the Supreme (*Gita*, XIII 35)

The chapter XLVI deals with *Three Qualities are Bondage* (vide the *Gita*, XIV 1-10) *Prakṛti*, the greater Nature, is His (God's) womb, as it were, in that He (God) places the seed of the cosmic ego, then begins evolution (*sṛṣṭi*) of the cosmos *Prakṛiti* or Nature does not evolve by itself, until it receives the spiritual influx Nature and individual souls exist in Him (God or Brahman), and when the spirit comes in contact with Nature or eternal energy, then begins evolution The *gunas* cause disturbance in the balancing state (*sāmyā-vasthā*) of the Nature or *Prakṛiti* The *gunas* are *sattva* (balance and tranquillity), *rajas* (activity) and unbalance) and *tamas* (inertia and dullness) Śrī Kṛṣṇa says to Arjuna "O Bhārata, *sattva* attaches to happiness, *rajas* to action, while *tamas*, enshrouding wisdom, attaches, in the contrary, to heedlessness Again *sattva* predominates over *rajas* and *tamas*, and *rajas*, over *sattva* and *tamas*, so *tamas* over *sattva* and *rajas*" (*Gita*, XIV 9-10) Now, those who aspire Divine knowledge, should not identify themselves with the qualities, but should discriminate between Nature and Spirit and attain to Spirit which will make themselves immortal bliss and happiness

The chapter XLVII deals with *Self is above All Qualities* (vide the *Gita*, XIV 11-27) The *Gita* says that the abode of happiness is in inside and not in outside Here the *Gita* discusses about the *gunas* and their influence upon the living beings, and says all to go beyond those *gunas* so as to enjoy eternal bliss, Śrī Kṛṣṇa says in the verses, 24th and 25th "Who is the same in pain and pleasure, i.e., self abiding, to whom a clod of earth, stone, and gold appear to be the same to whom the pleasant and the unpleasant are alike \* \* and who is wise and remains same in honour and insult, he is happy and goes above relativity"

The *Gita* here says about Bhakti Yoga, which is the path of love and devotion Swami Abhedananda says "To serve God in the path of devotion means to constantly contemplate

Him by completely withdrawing the mind from all external objects. Thus he becomes Brahman while still alive. He reaches perfection, and that is the ideal of all religions. In Bhakti Yoga, personal God is accepted. It is through personal God or *Isvara* and through the power (*sakti*) of *Isvara*, a man can realize the impersonal God who is the indeterminate (*nirguna*) Brahman. While explaining *sakti* of the Brahman Sankara said in his commentary on the *Gita* "सा शक्तिर्ब्रह्मैवाहं शक्तिशक्तिमतोरनन्तत्वादित्वामिप्रायः \* \* \*" i.e. Sankara meant that *sakti* or energy or potentiality of the Brahman is not different from the Brahman in whom *sakti* (*paramesha-sakti*) inheres. Anandagiri said in the glossary "सा शक्तिः ब्रह्मैवेति । कथं ? सामानाधिकरण्यं \* \* शक्तिरिति" i.e. *sakti* is the Brahman, and there is no difference in them.

The comments of Sankara and Anandagiri seem similar. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa who believed Brahman is *Sakti*, and *Sakti* is Brahman. To Sri Ramakrishna, Brahman and *maya* are non-different, though in names and forms they appear as different. Swami Abhedananda says that all dualistic and monistic meanings are analysed and included in the fourteenth chapter of the *Gita*.

The chapter XLVIII deals with *Tree of Samsara and the Highest Goal* (vide the *Gita*, XV 1-4). The fifteenth chapter begins with a description of the phenomenal universe which is known as *maya*, *avyakta* or undifferentiated consciousness. The nameless supreme Brahman is the root (*mulam*) of the tree of *samsāra*. The tree of *samsāra* is known as *Asvattha* which means temporary. "न शोऽपि स्याता इति वक्ष्यते, ता क्षणप्रभं सिनधु-भ्रत्यम्" । This tree of *samsāra* has its root above and branches below. Its leaves are the scriptures (*śāstras*) which contain wisdom and knowledge. He who understands the nature of this tree understands the secret of the universe as well as the highest truth that saturates the universe. The tree of *samsāra* (fig tree) is phenomenal and delusive so it enchants all living beings and drags them down to the den of delusion and causes their bondage. The leaves are the Vedas which give revelations. Men and women generally get light from the Vedas and gradually try to unfasten their bondage of delusion. Sankara raised question as to why the leaves of the tree are called scriptures. To this he himself forwarded answer

that as the leaves of a tree serve to protect the tree, so do the *shastras* serve to protect the phenomenal world. In fact, the scriptures are the storehouse of revelations and living inspirations, and so they direct us and guide us in the path of life.

The Swami says "The real title of that tree is called *buddhi* or cosmic intelligence. The source or undifferentiated energy, with that infinite Being at the basis, is the root and the trunk of the tree is the cosmic mind \* \* The sense-apertures are the hollows in that trunk, and the great elements of nature are the ego. Sense objects are like buds in the branches and the good and evil, all virtues and vices, are like the flowers of that tree, and the fruits are like pleasure and pain, happiness and misery." Anandagiri said "तस्य वृक्षस्य स'सार-ख्यस्य तदेव ब्रह्म सारभूतम्" i.e., the Brahman-consciousness is the soul of that tree of *samsāra*. So the Brahman must be attained to go beyond *samsāra* or *maya*.

*Maya* is known as *bhrama-jñāna* or wrong knowledge. Madhusudan Sarasvati said that the Brahman-knowledge is the ground of false knowledge, and for this reason the *Gita* says that the root of the tree of *samsāra* is upward 'सर्वस'सारभ्रमाधिष्ठानं ब्रह्म, तदेव मायया मूलमसौ तूर्ध्वमूलम्.' The *Katha-Upanishad* (III 1) also said in the similar way. Swami Abhedananda says that this tree of *samsāra* must rest somewhere. It must have beginning and end, and so it is unreal and changing. We can cut the tree with the sword and can rise above it. The sword is the sword of knowledge or right knowledge (*Brahmajñāna*), or sword is the sword of non-attachment (*vairāgya*). The *Pātanjala-darshana* and the *Gita* say that with the help of *abhyāsa* (repeated practice) and *vairāgya* (renunciation) we can bring the cessation of sorrow of bondage.

The chapter XLIX deals with *Eye of Wisdom can realize the Atman* (vide the *Gita*, XV 5-11). Sri Krishna says that real and permanent abode of peace is the attainment of the Brahmanhood, and the sun, moon, and fire cannot manifest it (vide *Gita*, XV 5-6). The *Katha-Upanishad*, (II 2-15), *Shvetāshara-Upanishad* (II 1-4) and *Mundaka Upanishad* (II 2 10) also say so.

The world of *maya* is believed to be different from the *Atman* or Brahman, but the *Gita* says that it is the reflection of the Divinity. God created, nay, projected this world of

appearance from within and created man after His own image. The *Upanishad* also says \* \* 'तत् सृष्ट्व तदेवानुप्राविशत्' \* \* i.e. not only God created this universe, but also entered into it and became one with it. So from the viewpoint of *maya* or delusion the world and the beings seem to be different from the Brahman, but from transcendental viewpoint it will be realized that the Brahman itself appears as *maya* or the universe. The wrong knowledge (*brahmayāna*) deludes and differentiates us from the Absolute, but the right knowledge gives us the correct idea that *mu* is no other than Brahman and the universe is no other than the Divine counterpart of the Brahman. Sri Krishna also instructs us to practise self-control and austerity, and when our soul is re-adjusted, we are able to see that the true Self or Brahman is non-different from us, and difference is created only by *maya*.

The chapter L deals with *Our Soul is an Object to be Achieved* (vide the *Gita*, XV 12-20). Sri Krishna says that light and heat that illumine and energize all the beings and objects of the universe, belong to Me, i.e., to the all-pervading *Atman*. Sri Krishna first forwards an illustration of the physical light, then of the mental, and then of the spiritual.

In the XV 16 verse, the *Gita* further says about *Kshara* and *Akshara* क्षरः सर्वाणि भूतानि कूटस्थोऽक्षर उच्यते' \* \* \* i.e., 'the perishable are all phenomena, and the eternal energy which produces them, is imperishable'. But nothing is lost, as all the perishable objects are stored up in the womb of the *Prakriti* which is the replica of energy of the Brahman. There are three worlds, physical, mental, and spiritual, and these worlds have their basis or ground as the Brahman. Sri Krishna says "Since I transcend the perishable and am beyond the imperishable, I am known in the world and in the Vedas as the supreme Spirit" (*Gita*, XV 18), and he who realizes this truth, is known as all-knowing or *sarvajña*.

The chapter LI deals with *Spirituality and Materialism* (vide the *Gita*, XVI 1-24). The Swami says that in the sixteenth chapter of the *Gita*, we will find the description of the spiritual and divine as well as demoniacal properties, which make us divine in one side and worldly in the other side. The good qualities to be possessed are fearlessness, steadfastness, charitable, non-killing, renunciation or detachment, compassion to

all creatures, non-covetousness, gentleness, love, forgiveness, fortitude, purity, external and internal absence of hatred and pride, insolence, etc. These qualities ennoble the mind and make men and women fit for receiving the everlasting lustre of the Absolute. The demoniacal qualities drag men and women in the den of unholiness and darkness. These marked two paths of light and darkness, of materialism and spirituality, of earth and heaven, make all either degenerated or unde-generated. But if we know that God dwells in us and He is the Soul of our souls, then all our darkness and ignorance will vanish, and we will be free from wrong knowledge forever and ever. There is a spiritual science which helps us in deciding what ought and what ought not to be done in life, and if we sincerely follow that science, we will be able to regulate our life to enjoy eternal bliss.

The chapter, LII deals with *Threefold Faith* (vide the *Gita*, XVII 1-6). The seventeenth chapter begins with the description of different faiths, which are divided into three categories of *sattvic*, *rājasic*, and *tāmasic*. There are two kinds of men or women who are believers (*āstika*) and disbelievers (*nāstika*).

Swami Abhedananda writes "In Vedānta, when you find the word 'faith' is used, it is not blind faith, but is based on rational argument \* \* The Sanskrit word for faith is *shraddhā*, which means a kind of conviction. The Hindu scriptures define *shraddhā* as 'गुरु-वेदान्तवाक्येषु विश्वासः श्रद्धा' i.e. *shraddhā* means belief in the words of spiritual preceptor and Vedānta. Faith is at the root of God-consciousness. It is a kind of self-knowledge or self-conviction. Sri Krishna says "Three-fold is the faith of people, which arises from their individual nature, there is *sattva* or peaceful nature, *rajas* or passionate nature, and *tamas* or nature of ignorance" (vide *Gita*, XVII 7). Faith of any person is in accordance with his nature or constitution of the mind. The *sāttvic* one worships the gods, the *rājasic* one worships the Yakshas, and the *tāmasic* one worships the departed spirits. From different acts and tendencies, there originate different divisions of faith. Three main divisions of faith are (a) that which leads to the realization of the *Atman*, (b) that which fulfils and brings only temporal results, and (c) that which leads to pain and misery. Faith which evolves



from unselfish motives, is rational and good

The chapter LIII deals with *Threefold Food, Worship, Austerity, and Gift* (vide the *Gita*, XVII 7-22). We have already discussed about three kinds of faith and worship, and now we will find three kinds of person, according to these faiths, and they are (a) extremely spiritual ones, (b) worldly ones, and (c) ignorant and superstitious ones. These three classes of person have their special tendencies, ideas, opinions, and works. Their foods and modes of living also vary, and it is also a fact that these persons are directed by three kinds of *gunas*, and so Sankara divided persons into three classes according to the tastes of men of *sattvic*, *rājasic*, and *tāmasic* natures. As tastes differ, so food. So different kinds of food have been prescribed in the *Gita* for three classes of person. Swami Abhedananda says: Moderation is to be observed. One should eat that kind of food which is suitable for the constitution. It is said in the Vedas: 'That food which is suited to one's self, does protect, and does not injure, but a greater quantity of the same food will injure one \*\*'. Some say that vegetarian food is more suitable for the practice of Yoga. 'But Sri Ramakrishna', says the Swami, 'did not lay stress upon selection or choice of food. He said that any kind of food which suit the physical constitution of a man and is easily digested, should be taken without any prejudice'. In fact, that kind of food which is easy for digestion, should be taken, and we can get enough of nourishment from vegetables, or from fish, or from other things, even if we do not eat flesh and animal food. It should be remembered that food and dress are not the essential things for attaining Divine knowledge, they are only the means.

The chapter LIV deals with *OM, Tat, Sat Three Names of the Brahman* (vide the *Gita*, XVIII 23-28). Of the three names, OM means *Pranava*, Tat means That, and Sat means Reality or absolute Brahman. All sounds and words are included in OM, because OM is composed of three letters, Ah U and Ma. Ah (अ) is the basic sound and Ma (म) is the last sound, and U (उ) is the intermediate or balancing one. If you go from Ah to Ma, you will have to come by the way of half-closing the lips. Patanjali called OM or *Pranava* the *vāchaka* or discloser, i.e., discloser or pointer of the indeter-

minate (*nirguna*) Brahman Swami Abhedananda says that with the utterance of Tat or That are performed the worships or austerities and other religious acts by the seekers of absolute Truth for emancipation of the (individual) soul. When all motivated selfish desires are replaced by unmotivated and unselfish desires for attaining the transcendent *Atman*, we realize the Essence of the universe as well as of all beings, sentient and insentient, and that realization of the non-related absolute Essence and attainment of perfect freedom come simultaneously. This stateless supreme state has been described by the monistic Vedanta as perfect freedom which comes by the removal of *ajnāna* or false knowledge and by simultaneous attainment of the Brahman knowledge. The triple designation of the absolute Brahman has been beautifully explained in the verses XVII 23-26 of the *Bhagavad Gita*.

Now, to make the important chapter LIV explicit, the Swami says that there are three kinds of devotee, *sāttvic*, *rājasic*, and *tāmasic*. But all the devotees who aspire to get the absolute knowledge of the *Atman*, should cultivate pure *sattva* by avoiding *rājasic* and *tāmasic* kinds of food, thought, and actions. With the help of *buddhi* and *vichāra*—intellect—the undying light of the Brahman which is no other than realization or immediate awareness (*apokshānubhūti*) of the absolute Reality, is attained.

The chapter LV deals with *Sannyāsa and Tyāga Distinguished* (vide the *Gita*, XVIII 1-3). What do we mean by the words *sannyāsa* and *tyāga*? The verse XVIII 2 of the *Gita* says that *sannyāsa* means renunciation and *tyāga* means abandonment of fruits of works or actions (vide the *Gita*, II 3, II 30, IV 19, IV 33, V 2, V 3, V 11-13, VI 1-2). A true Yogi is also known as a Sannyāsi (vide *Gita*, VI 2). Regarding abandonment of fruits of actions (*karmaphalatyāga*), it can be said that we should abandon the results of both the actions, physical and mental. The mental action is also regarded as action, and it is true that first we think about the scheme of action in the mind, and then that mental scheme is applied in outward world. All actions and duties are motivated by desire, so desire is the cause and action is the effect. Therefore, the principle of abandonment should be applied in both the fields, mental and physical. Sri Krishna says "Some philosophers

declare that all works or actions should be abandoned as evil and bondage, while others say that acts of worship and austerities should not be given up" (vide *Gita*, XIII 3) Yes, good works should be performed for the welfare of the mankind, but it should be remembered that those works or actions are known as good, which will purify our mind or heart Purification of mind is known as precondition for achieving Divine knowledge, but that does not mean that purification causes to bring Divine knowledge in man, because Divine knowledge is self-revealing and does not require any help or medium for its unfoldment Sankara also refuted the doctrine of *jñāna-karma-samucchaya*, i.e., the doctrine that says *jñāna* or *brahmanāna* requires the help of works for its manifestation

The chapter LVI deals with *Threefold is the Fruit of Actions* (vide the *Gita*, XVIII 4-12) The *Gita* says that *tyāga* or abandonment of fruits of actions is of three kinds, *yajña* (sacrifice), *dāna* (gift) and *tapah* (austerity)—"*yajña-dāna-tapah-karmah*" (*Gita*, XVIII 5) (a) Sacrifice means offering to God and it is the best form of sacrifice (b) The best gift is that which is given without seeking any return, (c) Austerity includes physical, mental, and spiritual Cleanliness, truthfulness and purification are the best austerities for attaining God-realization Now, the acts of worship, gift, and austerity should be performed without attachment and without seeking results (vide *Gita*, XVIII 3)

In the field of action, we notice two principles, duty and love It is true that "we cannot and ought not to abandon a work of any kind when we feel it is a duty, or we are obliged to do it This feeling of obligation as well as sense of duty bind us to certain principles of our daily life All our life is a term of duty" It has already been said that duty or sense of duty is a kind of obligation or bond, whereas love or sense of love has no obligation The sense of love means love for the *Atman* The *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* said that everyone loves everyone not for the body, but for the immortal soul that shines in everyone As for example, the husband loves his wife not for the body, but for the *Atman*, and the wife loves her husband in the similar way As the all-consciousness *Atman* shines within all beings and

all objects, so one loves another one or one atom attracts another atom for the inner essence and not for love of flesh or structure. So the term duty differs from the term love. In the sense of love, there lies a bond of feeling of oneness, whereas in the sense of duty, there we find a feeling of obligation and a selfish binding.

Now, while explaining threefold fruits of action, which are evil, good, and mixed, Sri Krishna says in the verse XVIII 9 "Whatever obligatory work is done, O Arjuna, merely because it ought to be done, abandoning attachment, and also the fruit, that abandonment is deemed to be *sāttvic*" So *tyāga* or abandonment is of three kinds, *sāttvic*, *rājasic*, and *tamasic* (vide *Gita*, XVIII 7-12), and the *sāttvic* are preferable. Therefore, action in the sense of duty is good, as it is performed without attachment and without asking the return or fruit, otherwise action in the sense of love is better.

It should be remembered that it is desire that creates our destiny. So he who renounces the fruits of works and abandons attachment, purifies his mind and goes beyond the laws of phenomena and attains perfect peace and freedom.

The chapter LVII deals with *Five Causes of Actions* (vide the *Gita*, XVIII 13-17). The great thinkers of India studied the universal law of cause and effect or action and reaction. The threefold fruits of actions come to all, but not to one who has abandoned the results or attachment to the results of works.

In the fourth chapter, Sri Krishna describes the philosophy of work. The philosophy of work is Karma Yoga and Sri Krishna says,

कर्मणो ह्यपि बोद्धव्यं बोद्धव्यश्च विकर्मणः ।

अकर्मनश्च बोद्धव्यं गहना कर्मणो गतिः ॥

\* \* \* \*

तत्तु कर्मफलासङ्गं नितरात्सो निराश्रयः ।

कर्मणभिः प्रयुतोऽपि नैव किञ्चित् करोति स ॥ ४।१७-२०

The contention of these verses is that when works are performed without attachment to their results, they are known as inaction (*akarma*), and they bring emancipation (*mukti*).

In the verse XVIII 13, five causes have been described and they are seat, actor, various instruments of sense-organs, several functions of the internal organs, and presiding deity, and Divinity (1) The seat of desire and work is the body (2) The second is the conscious entity which moves the body (3) The third thing is the various instruments of sense-entity (4) The fourth is the organs of activity and (5) the fifth is environment in which we live. The self-conscious entity is the sense of I. The sense of 'I' is the ego. The ego can be divided into two parts, one is the changeable part and the unchangeable part which is the source of consciousness and intelligence. It is the greater 'I' (*pākā āmi*), and the individual ego is the little 'I' (*kāñchā āmi*). Śrī Kṛṣṇa says: "He who is free from the egoistic sense of 'I', whose mind is not affected by passions and desires, does neither kill anyone, nor is bound by any work or its effect, though he may appear as killing somebody" (*Gita*, XVIII 17).

The chapter LVIII deals with *Three Impulses according to Three Gunas* (vide the *Gita*, XVIII 17-25). Śrī Kṛṣṇa says about *jñātā*, *jñāna*, and *jneya*. He says: "Knowledge to know (the object), the knower, and knowing process form three-fold nature of knowledge — 'ज्ञानं ज्ञेयं परिज्ञाता त्रिविधा कर्मचोदना'." Besides them, there are three medias of work, *karana* (instrument), *karma* (action or work), and *kartā* (doer) — 'करणं कर्म कर्तेति त्रिविधं कर्मसंग्रह' (vide *Gita*, XVIII 18). We cannot avoid these three natures when we perform work. There are ten external instruments (*karanas*), and four internal senses which are *manas*, *buddhi*, *chitta*, and *ahamkara*. In Vedānta, *chitta* and *ahamkāra* are included in the senses of *manas* and *buddhi*. There is another sixth sense, known as the Third Eye or *jñāna-netra*, by which one intuits the supreme knowledge. Gods and goddesses possess the third eye, because they are the symbols of the supreme Deity or Absolute. The Absolute or Brahman is intuited or realized by Divine knowledge, nay, the absolute Brahman is non-different from the supreme transcendental knowledge.

The Swami has discussed here about the Sāṅkhya philosophy of Kapila for explaining the *gunas* and the natures of *Puruṣa* and *Prakṛti*. The state of absolute equilibrium brings the perfect balance of mind and at that time absolute peace and

tranquility of mind come. In the state of that peace and harmony, Divine knowledge comes. This Divine knowledge is unique and one, and we divide it into parts in the phenomenal plane or in the plane of *maya*. So knowledge, knower, and object of knowledge as well as doer (*kartā*), instrument (*karana*) and action (*karma*) are the categories or ingredients of delusive world. In truth, there is no duality or manifoldness, but there shines all the time one and secondless all-consciousness Brahman.

In the phenomenal plane, each individual has two parts, changeable and mortal and unchangeable and immortal. Now, how can we get the highest knowledge which is unchangeable and immortal? Vedanta says that we can commune with the highest knowledge by going beyond nature. Nature is trying to show her miraculous powers and is presenting all kinds of jugglery and delusive charm. Nature is going everywhere and is doing everything to attract us to the world. The world is a study. In this whole book of the world, page after page, we turn and study, and after turning the pages we find that the whole book is useless and worthless. Then we turn for achieving the highest knowledge, or the knowledge of the unchangeable Reality.

The chapter LIX deals with *Three Kinds of Action* (vide the *Gita*, XVIII 35). There are three kinds of work and workers. Three kinds of work are physical, mental, and spiritual ones, and they manifest according to three *gunas*, *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*. Now, he who is a spiritual worker, is unattached and energetic. The mental worker is passionate and greedy, and the physical worker is he who is heedless, arrogant, and ignorant. While doing work, we should know the method of discriminating freedom from bondage. We should know that freedom brings everlasting bliss and happiness, and bondage brings sorrow and attachment to the delusive world.

The chapter LX deals with *Four Classes of Duty* (vide the *Gita*, XVIII 36-44). The life and energy of the society are the human beings who are possessed of different qualities and faculty of discrimination. The *Upanishad* says that the human plane is the best plane from where men and women can attain Godconsciousness which is known as real *mukti* or

emancipation From very ancient time, peoples lived together with mutual understanding and thus evolved the human society Peoples were divided into four *varnas* or castes, according to their social duties and capacities Now, what do we mean by caste? In the *Gita*, we find the philosophical origin of caste distinction Sri Krishna says, "Of Brahmins, Kshatriyas, and Vaishyas, Sudras, O Parantapa, the duties are divided according to qualities born of nature' (vide the *Gita*, XVIII 41) The qualities or *gunas* were born of nature or *Prakriti* \* \* 'स्वभावप्रभाविर्गुणैः' \* \* Svabhāva means nature or *mayā* made up of three *gunas* The Brahmins are the priestly class, the Kshatriya, the warrior class, the Vaishyas, the merchant class, and the Sudras are the serving class These are the four classes or castes These castes were not designed by God, but originated or evolved according to the necessity of the society The four classes of people were possessed of four duties Sri Krishna describes their duties in the verses XVIII 42-44 Swami Abhedananda says that those divisions are not applicable to the present society, because specific duties of the four castes are changed now In olden times, the Brahmins were possessed of good qualities like serenity, self-restraint, austerity, purity, forgiveness, fortitude, knowledge, spiritual perfection, and conviction regarding life after death, etc The good qualities evolved from the *sattva-gun* The Kshatriyas were possessed of bravery, boldness, generosity, etc The Vaishyas were possessed of the qualities of the merchants, and the Sudras used to perform the services, i.e., used to help and do work for others Each attained to perfection being devoted to his own duty

The chapter LXI deals with *Human Beings with Different Tendencies* (vide the *Gita*, XVIII 45-49) As men and women are the beings of the world of *mayā*, they are subject to three *gunas*, *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*, which evolved as the inherent qualities or categories of *mayā*

The soul brings with it certain tendencies and is born with certain qualities which are manifested through the agency of heredity or conditions of the parents Circumstances relating to birth of the individual affect a great deal and modify these tendencies to a certain extent, but the germs of these tendencies are not inherited by the soul which he possesses as

a predisposition to inherit such qualities. In performing duties, one will generally rise above, and outgrow a certain stage of development, and here the law of action and reaction is predominant.

The life is divided into different stages. There are the life of the student, life of householder, life of retirement (*vānaprastha*), and life of absolute renunciation and freedom (*sannyāsa*). But those divisions are not effective now. Renunciation (*sannyāsa*) is the highest state that assures them who are fed up with desires and gratifications of desires. The Swami says that when passions are subdued, the objects of passion lose their charm and attraction, and when charms and attractions of the earthly things are gone, there arises the transcendental Sun that dispels the darkness of *ajñāna* or *avidyā*.

The chapter LXII deals with *Serene Spirit is Undisturbed by Everything* (vide the *Gita*, XVIII 50-56). If we can please God through the acts of worship, then perfection comes through the grace of Him. The acts of worship means acts or works done without return and by that selfless work the heart or mind is purified and in the purified mind or shining intellect the Divine reflection of the absolute Brahman is reflected, and then *ajñāna* that resides in mind or intellect (as mind or intellect is the product of *ajñāna* or nescience) is replaced by *jñāna* or supreme knowledge. This process can be said to be grace of God, otherwise God never blesses or shows His grace to a man or woman of impure mind. In fact, preparation is necessary for receiving grace or knowledge. Sankara called it *jñāna-niṣṭha* (consummation of knowledge) — 'निष्ठा पर्यावसान परिमार्शिरित्येतत्' \* \* \* \* and this consummation of knowledge means perfection (*mukti*).

Swami Abhedananda says 'Here two things are given—perfection and Brahman. After reaching perfection through the performance of duties of daily life, we reach the Brahman as consummation \* \* First, we will have to find the secret, and make all the works of our daily life as acts of worship, and gradually the heart will be purified. That purification of the heart is a condition under which grace of the Lord descends. *The grace and purification of the heart are one and the same thing. When heart is purified, the grace is*



*there* So, in order to attain the grace, a Bhakta or devotee thinks of the purification of heart, and that condition comes through Divine will. But a Jñāmi, or a Karmi, tries to purify his heart and *he knows that grace of the Lord and purification of heart are simultaneous*. The Swami further defines the term *purification* which produces devotion.

We should know also what do we mean by consummation of knowledge. Swami Abhedananda says that supreme consummation of knowledge or true wisdom is the knowledge of the Absolute. It is known as Self-knowledge, and Self-knowledge and true Self are identical. When intellect stops, when mind is inactive, there shines the true Self or Self-knowledge. The sense-knowledge and supreme supersensible knowledge are not one, but supreme knowledge and transcendental consciousness are one and the same thing. Consciousness is divided into super-consciousness, subliminal consciousness, and super-normal consciousness. The range of consciousness increases when we remove limitations. Time and space limit the range of consciousness. When we rise above the categories of time and space, we rise above ranges and then we find or realize that the undivided vast sheet of consciousness shines all the time and pervades everything. This limitless supreme consciousness is achieved when through the power of discrimination (*viveka* and *vichāra*) we come to know the self-shining source-consciousness. The source-consciousness does not require any proof for its existence, as the sun does not require the light of a lamp to be seen. Devotion or *nishtha*, which means knowledge, is required for recognising *Nishtha* or knowledge aided by all the favourable conditions of its rise and development and freed from all obstacles, culminates in a firm conviction by one's own experience (*ātma-pratyaya*). "When knowledge of unity of the absolute Self culminates in a firm conviction by one's own experience, then knowledge is said to have attained supreme consummation which means *jñāna-nishthā* or devotion to knowledge."

The chapter LXIII deals with *Lord said Surrender unto Him* (vide the *Gita*, XVIII 57-63). Śrī Krishna says that perfection can be attained either through devotion, or right knowledge. The true lover of God forgets himself or his separate entity when he loves God. The real meaning of 'love' is

expression of oneness. So a Bhakta when performs works as worship of God, he forgets his separate existence, as a Jñāni removes his separateness through jñāna or vichāra. Sri Krishna says 'But he who performs all actions, having taken refuge in Me, reach by My grace the everlasting abode of peace'. So we should take refuge in God, we should withdraw our mind from the senses and sense-objects and should fix the mind upon the supreme Soul. The *Kathopanishad* also said 'पराधि खानि बाधेते स्वयम्भु, पराङ् पश्यति नात्मरात्मन्'. Really senses take away our mind from the self-shining *Atman*, and so we should be alert for fixing our mind on God. We should learn to rule over the nature which deludes us and should intensely long for the fulfilment of the supreme goal which is known as *mukti* or right knowledge. Naturally we have made ourselves the tools in the hand of *maya*, so we should turn our eyes and attention to Mayavin who is, in essence, the all-consciousness and all-bliss Brahman.

The chapter LXIV deals with *Doubts of Arjuna were Removed* (vide the *Gita*, XVIII 63-78). The *mahāvākya* 'Thou art That' or तत् त्वम् असि reveal knowledge of the Brahman. This revelation does not come through scholarship and book-knowledge, through mere intellect and *vichara*, but it comes through divine communion or right knowledge. Ritual, ceremonies, and symbols have their values, but they cannot reveal the absolute Truth. By taking refuge in God, says Sri Krishna, we can get it. This revelation comes like a flash, and when it touches the heart, darkness of nescience (*avidya*) dies away forever and ever. This revelation does not require any temple or church or mosque, but it requires only sincerity and deep penetration into the core of Reality.

Now, regarding the sayings cum-teachings of the *Gita*, the *Gita* itself has summarized them in the last portion of the eighteenth chapter. Arjuna as a Sadhaka had many questions, and doubts arose in him, from time to time and Sri Krishna as his friend and teacher answers questions and clears the doubts of Arjuna. All the questions and answers, it is said, were heard by Sanjaya, and they were related to the blind monarch Dhritarastha. "Thus have I heard this wonderful dialogue between Lord Krishna and the great Arjuna, which makes the hair stand on end" (vide the *Gita*, XVIII 74).

Sanjaya heard the dialogue through the grace of Vyāsa and received the power of hearing through ecstatic vision. Sanjaya also witnessed the *visvarupa* or universal form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa through Divine vision.

The chapter LXV deals with *Conclusion* of the whole discussion of the *Bhagavad Gita*. The eighteen chapters of the *Gita* can be divided into three parts, containing six chapters in each, and these three parts correspond to three parts of the divine sentence: Thou art That or तत् त्वम् असि. i.e. the individual soul is no other than the Brahman.

The *naishkarma-karma-yoga*, as instructed and prescribed by the *Gita*, is a unique contribution to the world of ethics. This Yoga seems similar to *categorical imperative* or moral law as said by Immanuel Kant. But there is a difference between the two ethical laws as forwarded by Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Kant, because Kant's ethics of *naishkarma* or duty for duty's sake involves the concept of right and obligatory duty, whereas Śrī Kṛṣṇa's ethics of *naishkarma* involves the concept of good which is the highest one superior to right and duty. The *Gita* teaches also true kind of love which knows no condition or selfish motive. This true love or *prema* is recognised as the precondition of *jñānanusthā* or consummation of knowledge.

The *Gita* admits the importance of *bhakti* or devotion which is taught by the school of *Pancharātra* and other *Vaishnava* literature. The *Gita* admits also the theory of grace or *kṛpā*, which is universal. Swami Abhbedananda explains grace as a state of relaxation, which comes under certain conditions. Anything that is spiritually uplifting and ennobling, anything that brings right knowledge to the soul, and comes from the all-powerful infinite source, is grace. The Swami says that as we are the children of God, we shall get grace of God, and by our birth-right we shall receive it.

The *Gita* teaches Karma Yoga, Raja Yoga, and Jnana or Sankhya Yoga. (a) The *Gita* teaches Karma Yoga or selfless work or performance of work in the spirit of worship of God. The *Gita* says that if we perform works without the hope of its fruit or return, then that selfless work will purify our mind, and purification of mind means transformation of mind into its essence, the pure consciousness or *chit*. (b) The *Gita* teaches Raja Yoga or the methods of concentration (*dhāranā*), medita-

tion (*dhyāna*), and superconscious (*samādhi*), and also to reach the state of concentration and meditation. The *Gita* teaches the practices of *śama*, *dama*, *tīkṣhā*, *prāṇāyāma*, *prāṇayama* etc. (c) The *Gita* teaches Jñāna or Sāṅkhya Yoga which involves the practice of discrimination or *neti-neti vichāra*. The path of knowledge, says the *Gita*, teaches all to get rid of the limitations of time, space, and causation which are known as *māya* or nescience.

The *Gita* teaches theism (*dvaitavāda* and *bhaktivāda*), and does not ignore monism (*advaitavāda*). The *Gita* regards God as the supreme and perfect Man or Puruṣhottama who is known as the trans-empirical supreme principle which saturates as well as transcends *Kṣhara* and *Akṣhara*—the world and being and God.

The *Gita* admits both personal and impersonal—determinate and indeterminate—immanent and transcendent—aspects of God or the supreme Principle. So we find that the *Gita* has not prescribed any rigid practice for all, as it admits dualism, qualified non-dualism, and non-dualism or monism. The *Gita* maintains that *isms* may differ, faiths, and spiritual practices may differ, but the ultimate goal is one and the same.

The *Gita* being an extract of all the *Upanishads* or Vedānta, teaches the *Ātman-Brahman* universal Principle which unites both the individual and the universal as well as the immanent and the transcendent Reality. The universal teachings of the *Bhagavad Gita* that which knows no barrier of caste, creed and denomination, but they embrace all and harmonizes all. So the followers of the *Gita* should have to break the chain of delusion and should dive deep into the core of the Essence or universal Spirit, the Puruṣhottama.

## CHAPTER XXXVIII

### FULFILMENT OF ALL DESIRES

Our earthly life consists in constant efforts to fulfill our natural desires. The desire is like the propelling powers of the machine of our minds and bodies. It may be compared to the steam of a huge engine. As an engine cannot work without steam power, so the machine of our minds and bodies cannot perform any action without being propelled by the power of desire. If we do not have desires at all, then we would be like chairs, like the wall, or like any other inanimate object. Desires have tremendous powers, and we do not understand exactly how much power this desire has. Science tells us that all the internal organs of our bodies, are but the results of our desires.

The desire to see has produced this retina of optic nerve. The desire to hear has produced the desire of hearing. The desire to eat has produced the desire to masticate. The desire to breathe has caused the lungs, and the brain is produced by the desire to think. The desire to walk and to cease has produced the legs, feet, and the desire to feel has produced the hands.

If we do not exercise our desire, for instance, if we lift the hand and let it remain there, it will die, but by exercising our desire it will fulfill our purpose. In short, as all the sense organs and external organs are nothing but the offsprings of the desires of those minute germs of living substance, for what is ordinarily understood by natural selection, is nothing but the expression of desire. These desires are latent in us. We do not get them from outside, but they arise from within. We bring these desires, and we are born with them. They are so latent that they come with us wherever we go.

There are various kinds of desire. They may be divided into three general classes.

FIRST —The desire to live

SECOND —The desire to enjoy life

THIRD —The desire to avoid pain and suffering

These three kinds of desire lie at the root of all works that we perform during our life-time

The desire to live is the most universal of all other desires. Its expression is not only to be found in human beings, but also in the lower animals and in all living creatures, and in vegetables. Wherever there is a desire for food, there is a desire to nourish or drink. For nourishment, there is also to be found the expression of this universal desire to live. If this desire to live did not exist in our soul, and were not latent in each human soul, then no human being would take so much trouble to earn his living, or would face such competition and struggle for existence. All humanity would have committed suicide long ago, and this world would be a barren desert, if this desire did not exist at the time of all manifestations of life. Think of all the time we spend, in order to sustain life to keep our body in good health, to preserve our physical forms. How much time the Faith-healers and Christian Scientists are spending to keep it in form.

All desires to eat, drink, and clothe ourselves, to have heat and cold air in hot weather, are but secondary desires. They are but the outcome of one desire, which is universal, and that is desire to live. When the question of self-preservation is answered by supplying ourselves with all the necessities of life, then arises the desire to prolong existence beyond one's own life by begetting children, which is another form of desire to live. Very few people understand this. The desire to propagate children is the outcome of the desire to live in the form of children. Therefore, marriage, taking care of children, is all the expression of the animal desire, and that universal desire to live keeps its existence by propagation.

Along with the fulfilment of this desire to live come other desires. The desire to enjoy life, and therefore, to avoid pain, sorrow and suffering go together, and you cannot separate them. The first is the desire to live. Intrinsicly we like those things which bring a pleasant sensation, or an agreeable feeling. We hate those things that are unpleasant or stand in our way of fulfilling our desire to live. For the desire to live and to enjoy life, all human beings like other lower animals are constantly busy in fulfilling these desires. Those who lived in the past, did the same as we are doing, and those

who will live in the future, will continue to do the same. The desire to live again causes the fear of death, which is considered to be the terrible enemy of life and all enjoyments. Wherever we find the desire to live, there is also to be found the expression of that fear of death in all human beings as also in lower animals. We do not like to die, but every one is subject to death. There is nothing in the universe that will not die. Everything that is born, must come to an end. No matter, however strong our desire to live may be, we cannot keep this body forever, but it will pass away also in time. We may take special care of the body. We may try to cure all the diseases, bringing all the comforts and luxuries together, but still we will not be able to keep this body forever. If a man possesses all the comforts of life with all the wealth of the whole nation, nevertheless, he will not be able to live forever on this earth, consequently he will not be able to fulfill that desire to live on this plane forever.

Those who are materialistic in their views and consider that death is the end of life and nothing remains after death, have neither object, nor solution to fulfill that desire, but those who understand the true nature of life and its meaning and purpose, realize that death is only the means to change, and that entity or being which is the highest, does not die, but continues to live even when this gross physical body is reduced to its elements. But there are some agnostics, who think that if we cannot live forever, let us beget children and live in the form of posterity in the form of children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. These thinkers dwell on the surface. They do not go deeper than the surface. They do not understand the nature of life, nor its meaning and purpose of which they do not know. So long the desire exists in the soul, it must continue to live on this plane or some other plane. It will also continue to manifest that desire to live always. This is one of the strongest proofs of immortality or immortal nature of life.

## CHAPTER XXXIX

### GODDESS DURGA THE DIVINE ENERGY

In India, the worship which surpasses all others in excellence, is of Goddess Durga among the Hindus. Looked upon with profound regard by them, it may be called their national festival. In different parts of India, Goddess Durga, the Mother of the universe is adored in different names, such as Amba and Ambika in Kashmir and Deccan, Hingala and Rudrani in Gujrat, Kalyani in Kanyakubja, Uma in Mithila, and Kanyakumari in Kumarka. Thus the autumnal Durga-worship or the divine ritual called the Navaratra (the Nine Nights' Worship) is held everywhere in India, from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin and from Dwarka and Hinglaj of Beluchistan to Puri the holy land of Sri Jagannath. Also the Buddhists of Nepal, Bhutan, Sikkim, and Tibet have their nine nights' ritual. And what is more, the Goddess is being venerated and worshipped in places outside India, such as, China, Japan, Kambuja, Champa, and Java, where Hinduism and Buddhism had been preached.

There is in the Buddhist scripture of Mahayana, a reference to Goddess Vajratara,—still another form of Goddess Durga, who is, even today, worshipped in countries like Tibet, China, and Japan. It is true that the Rig Veda does not contain any reference to Goddess Durga, but it contains the hymn called *Devi-sukta*, which is recited at the time of Durga-worship. The Mother of the universe, the primordial Energy (Adyasakti), described in the *Devi-sukta* is given the form of appearance of fire.

It is stated in the scriptures that Daksha-Prajapati performed many sacrifices. Of these, one sacrifice called Parvati-Daksha has been referred to in the section *Satapatha Brahmana* belonging to the Yajur Veda. The altar for that sacrifice was accordingly named 'Daksha-tanayā', which, in Rig Veda, is mentioned as 'Daksha-tanā'.

In the *Ramayana*, one does not find any reference to



Goddess Durga But, in different places of the *Mahabharata*, the name of Durga and hymns and eulogies in her honour are to be met with There is, in the sixth chapter of the *virata-parva*, a hymn composed by Arjuna in praise of Durga In the *Blusma-parva*, again, we find Śrī Krishna advising Arjuna to make an obeisance to Durga before the commencement of the battle and pray for success The Durga of the *Mahabharata* was a four-armed and four-faced virgin of dark complexion Referred to as the slayer of the *Asuras* (demons), she was a goddess dwelling in the Vindhya mountains delighting in wine, flesh and animal sacrifices In the same *Virata parva*, again, a hymn in praise of Durga describes her as a virgin of the family of Nanda *Gopa*, not yet the wife of Śiva Durgā was then the goddess of the non-Aryan Sabaras (who put on the leaves of turmeric plants) Perhaps for that reason Durga is given the name of Parna-sabari implying that she remained the goddess of the Sabaras and wore the leaves used by these people Durga was also the family deity of the *Gopas* (or *Ahiras* or milkman) of the Vindhya mountains

Durga was worshipped by such aboriginal tribes as Sabaras, Varvaras, and Pulindas She is also spoken of as a goddess, delighting in wine and flesh Perhaps for that reason the autumnal Chandi-worship is called the Sabarotsava—a festival of the Sabaras In the *Kalikapurana*, the Sabarotsava is spoken of as a ceremony to be held compulsorily at the time of the immersion of the goddess It was then the custom to invest the ceremony with obscene dances and tribal songs The same custom even now prevails among the *dhulis* (persons playing on drums) at the time of consigning the image into the river

Durga and Chandi were also the deities of the tribe called the Kiratas Hence Chandi is named Kiratī or Kiratini In the *Padma-purana* as well as in the *Skanda-purana*, it is described that at the request of Brahmā the Goddess of Night entered the womb of Menaka, the queen of Himalayas, the shrouding complexion of Uma made her dark in colour This proves clearly that it is the Vedic Goddess of Night who is being worshipped as the Parvatī in the *Puranas* Uma was born on the bright fourth day of the lunar fortnight of the month of Jaiṣṭha, hence the Vrata called *Uma-chaturthī* is

observed on that day.

The *Puranas* describe Durga as Katyayani. A great Rishi, Katyayana by name, practised severe penance, on the Himalayas. One day to this hermitage came Brahmā, Vishnu and Maheswara. There, in a watchful mood, with a view to slaying Mahishasura, they drew forth from their beings energies which coalesced to form the deities. Since she was first worshipped by the great goddess, who was no other than Durga, the essence of all Rishi, Katyayana, she came to be called Katyayani (or the goddess adored and worshipped by Katyayana). This Goddess Durga came into being on the fourteenth of the dark fortnight in Asvina, she was worshipped by Katyayana on the seventh, eighth and ninth days of the bright fortnight in the same month, and on the tenth she killed Mahishasura. Since Durga sprang from the energies of Brahmā, Vishnu, and Maheswara, she personified all their brilliance and power. Another name of Durga is Narayani meaning thereby that she is Mahamaya Adyasakti (the great cosmic illusion, the source of the primordial Energy) in the form of a Yogic trance, and hence a part of Narayana sleeping on the huge, many-headed snake, the Sesha-naga, on the primeval waters (*karana shaila*) in the seventh chapter of the Ganesh Khanda, belonging to the *Brahma vaivarta-purana*, Narayana says,

सृष्टिकर्त्री च प्रकृतिः सर्वेषां जननी परा ।

मम स्तुत्या च मन्मथा तेन नारायणी स्मृता ॥

On the first day of Durga-worship it is the custom to pay regard to an image of a goddess made of the leaves of nine plants and supposed to represent Durga. The said image is called *Nava-patrika* (commonly called *Kala-bau*), or the Goddess Durga in her nine forms. This *Nava-patrika* consists of varied types of fruits, roots, corns and flowers.

Now, who was Sarasvatī? In the Vedic time, Sarasvatī was a big river on whose banks were performed all the holiest sacrifices by the Aryan Rishis. There chanting the sacred verses of the Vedas they would invoke and worship various deities. While the Aryans lived on the banks of this river, there occurred the gradual efflorescence of their religion, knowledge, ethics, and arts. It was through the grace of this river

that their agriculture and commerce expanded and their social life got organised. In the Vedic age, therefore, Sarasvatī, though a river, was regarded as the presiding deity of all branches to knowledge, such as fine arts, mechanics and the art of music and dancing. Later when the image of Goddess Sarasvatī was conceived, the symbols of the river, the water, the lotus, and the swan—were retained, while, at the same time, in her hands were placed a book, a pen, and a *vena*, and the complexion of her body was made gleaming white, suggestive of pure illuminating knowledge of wisdom. Being thus identified with the Goddess of Speech personifying the Sabda-brahman or Sphota.

In the Buddhist Tantra, Sarasvatī is known as Mahasarasvatī, Vajra-veena-Sarasvatī, Vajra-Sarada, Arya-Sarasvatī, Nila-Sarasvatī, etc. In the Hindu scriptures, the forms of Sarasvatī have been conceived in different ways. There we find Simhavanī-Sarasvatī, Hamsavahana-Sarasvatī, Mīyuravahana-Sarasvatī, Nṛtta-Sarasvatī. The complexion of Sarasvatī is white which represents the *suddha-sattva-guna*.

Similarly Devī Lakṣmī is the representation of the setting or evening sun, as Devī Sarasvatī is conceived as the rising or morning sun. In the similar way, Devī Durgā is known as the representation of the midday-sun. Lakṣmī is also known as Śrī, though in the Paurāṇic age, Śrī and Lakṣmī were recognised as two different deities. In the Smṛiti age, it is said, Śrī was identified with Śrī-Devī. Some of the Western scholars identify Lakṣmī as the Buddhist goddess. Grunwedel is of the opinion "The worship of this popular goddess (Śrī Lakṣmī) must have prevailed in Buddhist times throughout the whole of India." But opinions differ, because most of the scholars are of the opinion that the Buddhists borrowed many Hindu deities in their list of pantheons. The Buddhists identify Lakṣmī with Mañjuśrī.

Now, who is Gaṇapati? Gaṇapati is one of the forms of the sun, the Mithra. Gaṇapati or Ganesha is known as the presiding deity of the evening, which is recognised as the Sandhyā-devī. In the *Purāṇas*, Gaṇapati is described as the son of Śiva, who is known as the sun or Mithra. In the Buddhist scriptures, Gaṇapati is known as Vinayaka.

Kartikeya accompanies Ushadevi, who is no other than Sarasvati. Kartikeya is known as the warrior deity. Kartikeya helps Sarasvati, i.e., Ushadevi to manifest herself, and so Kumāra-Kārtikeya is described in the *Bhairavya-purana* as Skanda, the Saktidhara.

Kartikeya is invoked on the last day of the month of Kartika in Bengal. In the Deccan too, the worship of Kartikeya is specially popular. In the province of Madras, there are many devotees of such gods as Siva, Vishnu, and others, those who worship Kartikeya are also large in number. This is why one finds in Madras so many temples of Kartikeya together with those of Vishnu and Siva. The South Indians invoke Kartikeya everyday in the names of 'Kumar-Swami and Subrahmanya-deva', and with great eclat they bring out processions with the image of the deity on the date of Kartikeya worship every year. In Madras, Kartikeya is specially recognised in the names of Subrahmanya which, according to the people of Madras, is just another name of the deity. But the fact is that Kartikeya and Subrahmanya are not the deity, since the hymns with which they are invoked give different description of their forms and complexion. While Kartikeya is depicted as being radiant like molten gold, Subrahmanya is pictured as being bright, red like vermilion. The form of Kartikeya riding on a peacock was conceived of in ancient times at the sight of the rising sun at dawn. With the sunrise, darkness is dispelled. That darkness represents the Tarakasura of the *Puranas*. The colour of the early sun resembles molten gold. The colour of Kartikeya has therefore been golden. The rays of the early sun are dispersed everywhere. The expanded tail-feathers of the peacock carrying Kartikeya is suggestive of those scattered rays of the sun.

It is said that on the sixth day after Kartikeya was born, he killed Tarakasura. For this he came to be called *Devasenapati*, or the commander-in-chief of the gods. According to late Nagendra Nath Basu the great oriental scholar, the worship of Skanda or Kartikeya was the oldest religious ceremony in Bengal. After the fourth century A.D., the Gupta Emperors such as Skandagupta, Kumaragupta and others used to worship Kartikeya. In the seventh century A.D., the Chalukya Kings of the Deccan introduced Skanda-worship with

avid interest. But, in Bengal, Durga-worship was introduced for the first time in 1580, during the reign of the Mughal Emperor Akbar, since then the image of Kartikeya also is being worshipped with great regard by the people of Bengal.

During the reign of the Mughal Emperor Akbar, Udayanarayana, who was the father of Kallukbhatta, the commentator on the *Manusamhita*, desired to perform a great sacrifice, and for this he sought the counsel of the great scholar, Ramesh Sastri, the Royal priest of Fahirpur in the district of Rajshahi. According to Ramesh Sastri, the Hindu scriptures mention four great sacrificial rituals which are Visvajit, Rajsuya, Asvamedha, and Gomeda. But since in the Kaliyuga (implying the era of sin and degeneration), it is impossible to make necessary arrangements for these sacrifices, Ramesh Shastri advised Udayanarayana to perform Durga-worship. After Kallukbhatta's son, King Kansanarayana performed the festival of Durga-worship by spending nearly nine lacs of rupees. The procedural rules of Durga-worship were also laid down by Ramesh Sastri. In the sixteenth century, A.D., Raghunandan who was well versed in traditional law, wrote on the subject of Durga-worship in his book, *Hutatatva* in which he prescribed the rites and customs of Devi worship. When the leader of the Vargees, Raghunath Bhonsle of Maharashtra (King of Berar) came to Bengal to collect *Chauth*, he performed in Katwa, near Navadvipa, Durga-worship according to the customs then prevalent in Bengal.

## CHAPTER XXXX

### THOUGHTS ON YOGA, UPANISHAD AND GITA

#### RAJA YOGA

The mind-stuff is divided into five states (or planes) according to its five manifestations Vyasa in his *Sankhya-pravachan-vasya* mentioned about these five states of the mind in connection with the aphorism "अथ योगानुशासनम्"। The commentator Vyasa said that the five planes of *chitta* (mind) is wandering, forgetful, occasionally steady or distracted, one-pointed, and restrained Vachaspati Mishra (and also Bhojaraja) said

(2) The wandering (*kshipta*) condition of the mind (*chitta*) is that in which it is always thrown by disturbing active energy (*rajas*) towards these and those objects, and is thus extremely unsteady

(b) In the forgetful stupid (*mudha*) state, the mind is possessed of the modification (*vrutti*) of deep sleep on account of the excess of inertia which is the quality of *tamas*

(c) The occasionally steady or distracted (*vikshipta*) state is differentiated from the wandering The difference consists in the occasional steadiness of that which is for the most part unsteady This excess of its unsteadiness is either acquired, or brought about by the obstacles of disease, disinclination, etc., to be mentioned later

(d) The one-pointed (*ekagra*) is that which moves along one line only

(d) The restrained or suppressed (*niruddha*) state of the mind is that in which all the mental modifications have been restrained, and exist only as potencies

In fact, the Hindu psychologists have divided mental conditions into five different parts The first one is the scattered state of the mind, or *kshipta* The next is the *mudha* that is stupid The scattered state (*kshipta*) is one extreme, and the stupid (*mudha*) is the other The mind is wholly idiotic, cannot think, cannot see anything clearly.

The third state is *vikshipta* that swings between two extremes, sometimes tremendously, active and sometimes wholly stupid. The fourth state is called *ekagra*, the one-pointed state of the mind. The fifth state is that of the mind which is held under restraint or absolute control by the will-power. In that state, the oneness of the senses are completely closed.

When the mind is concentrated to some subtle object, it is known as *savichara*. When the mind is concentrated in the objects of senses, it is called *sānanada*, and when the mind is absolutely concentrated in the *Atman*, the non-related pure consciousness, then it is known as *ashmita-yoga*. Vachaspati Mishra defined (a) *vitarka* as a superficial attempt of the mind, because it has the gross phenomena for its sphere of action, (b) *vichara* as a meditation which has for its sphere of action, the causes of the gross phenomena, the subtle elements, the five *tanmatras*, the manifested and the unmanifested essence of matter (the *linga* and the *alinga*), (c) *ananda* as the blissful modification of consciousness which consists in the illumination of the mind, as regards the acts of sensation, with gross phenomena for their objects, and (d) *ashmita* or egoism as the consciousness of being one with the Self or *Atman*. Egoism is the subtle cause of the instrumental powers inasmuch as they are born out of it, and egoism appearing as the Self, the subject is the consciousness of being one with the Self.

In the case of sensation, when any sensation arises, it comes through some nerves and by certain stimuli the nervous matter is agitated, and this agitation flows in the form of a current through the nerves until they reach the cortical cells of the brain. So, sensations, or vibrations of the external objects which come through the nerves, are nothing but suggestions, and these suggestions are carried by these nerves to the brain.

The brain is like a higher office or court, and there remains, i.e., shines the self-consciousness as an officer or a judge. That self-consciousness controls and conducts everything by the help of the mind. Generally we consider the mind as the director of all things but, in truth, the mind is an instrument, and it has no consciousness of its own. It appears as conscious, because the *Atman*, the storehouse of consciousness or knowledge, shines behind it. So if any kind

of incident happens in the outside world, the duty of the mind is to send them at once to the brain. The mind sends those incidents to the higher office (court of the brain) in the form of a message or current. The court of brain receives that message, and sends forth again to the mind. The mind then receives it and affirms it, and this affirmation of the mind is no other than sensation or perception. Therefore, there must exist a conscious entity for becoming sensation or perception. This conscious entity is the *ego*, or the *Atman*. The *ego* or *Atman* is the doer of everything, but it does everything through the medium of the mind. The mind being a medium does everything for sensation, or feeling, or perception. But, in truth, the *ego* or *Atman* is the source and director of the mind, and without the *ego* or *Atman*, the conscious entity, psycho-physical condition is not fulfilled. As for example, when the *ego* or *Atman* goes out of the gross physical body, the body remains as dead, and there remains no sensation or feeling. The body with its face, eyes, nose, ears, and other organs remains as it is, but the organs are not possessed of feelings or sensations.

Perception or every kind of sense experience involves a psycho-physical condition or process. In Advaita Vedanta, knowledge or consciousness can be said to be an experience or perception, because until and unless knowledge or consciousness in the forms of the knower (*jñata*), the known (*jñeya*) and knowledge (*jñana*, the process) become one, so long an experience, or a perception, does not happen. Advaita Vedanta says that immediate perception (*pratyaksha*) as a process (*pramana*) is that which gives rise to a modification (*vrutti*) and it manifests consciousness (*chit*). So, from the standpoint of Advaita Vedanta, consciousness (*chit*) itself is regarded as an immediate valid knowledge or perception (*pratyaksha-pramana*). The subject 'I' or the internal organ (*antahkarana*) and the object (*vishaya*) are the presupposition of the act of perception. Consciousness (*chit*) is the ground or substratum (*adhisthana*) of all of them. This consciousness shines always in both the subject (*antahkarana*) and the object (*vishaya*). The subject is known as *pramata* or *pramatri-chaitanya*. *Pramata* or *pramatri* is the subject and consciousness is *chit*, and in this sense, *pramata* when it is in



the internal organ (*antahkarana*), is called the *pramana-chaitanya*. And in this sense when it is in the object, it is called *vishaya-chaitanya*.

Now, the internal organ (*antahkarana*) is the abode of all modifications (*vrittis*) or *vritti*-consciousness. The consciousness (*chit*) that resides in the *Atman* (really pure consciousness itself is the *Atman*) goes out of the body through sense organs to the object, and when it (consciousness) comes in contact with the object, it assumes the form of the object. This form is called the *antahkarana-vritti*. In fact, this *vritti* is a state of *antahkarana*. Now, when consciousness (*chit*) goes out of the body through space and covers the object, the subject-consciousness, the process- or space-consciousness and the object-consciousness (*pramata*, *pramana* and *prameya chaitanya*) become one, being completely identified with one another. As for example, when water is raised from a tank and is taken to a field through a canal or passage, then water of the tank, water of the canal for passage, and water of the field become one or identified. Such also happens in the case of perception or sensation. During perception, all consciousness of the subject, object, and process are one or identified. Three kinds of consciousness (*pramata*, *prameya* and *pramana*) that occupy the same point of space are identical. Specially the Advaita thinkers somehow assume that the things that occupy the same point of space, are identical. So before knowing an object, or a thing, it is not known, and that means there is non-knowledge of the object, or of the thing. Nescience (*ajnana*) obscures the object or thing, which is also the product of nescience (*ajnana*). Now, consciousness (*chit*) that lies in modification (*vritti*) really destroys the nescience (*ajnana*) that exists in the object or thing, and then the object or thing is revealed. So Advaita Vedanta says that an object, or a thing (*vishaya* or *vastu*) is not known by perception (*pratyaksha*) when there is nescience (*ajnana*) in the *vishaya-chaitanya*, and from this it follows that knowledge of perception or *pratyaksha* (of an object, or of a thing) presupposes destruction or removal of nescience (*ajnana*), and simultaneously the object or thing is revealed, i.e., perceived.

As for example, there is a jar. It is not known, because there is nescience (*ajnana*) in the consciousness (*chit*) which is

the ground (*adhisthana*) of nescience (*ajnana*) The jar comes in contact with the eyes of the percipient His internal organ (*antahkarana*) goes out through the outlet of the eyes, and reaches the jar Then the jar and its modification (*vrutti*) occupy the same point of space In the modification (*vrutti*), there is the process-consciousness (*pramana chaitanya*), and in the jar, there is the object-consciousness (*vishaya-chaitanya*) On account of modification (*vrutti*), nescience (*ajnana*) that lies or resides in the object-consciousness, is destroyed or removed, and as a result of this, the process consciousness (*pramana-chaitanya*) becomes identical with the object-consciousness or *vishaya chaitanya* This identity (*tadatmaya*) is known as the knowledge of perception (*pratyaksha*) Now, it is a fact, as I have said before, that from the standpoint of consciousness or *chit* there is neither difference in it as the subject-consciousness (*pramatri-chaitanya*), object-consciousness (*vishaya-chaitanya*), and the process or relation-consciousness (*pramana-chaitanya*), nor does it need to be identical The difference lies that it is superimposed (*adhyasta*) only from the standpoint of nescience (*ajnana*) and its products So, after the difference is made, the necessity arises for identifying one consciousness with another consciousness

According to Advaita Vedanta, perception (*pratyaksha*) is of two kinds, *savikalpaka* and *nirvikalpaka* A perception of an object that involves relation (*samyoga*) of the substantive and the attributive, is *savikalpaka*, as for example, a jar is qualified by jar-ness In the *nirvikalpaka pratyaksha*, there occurs no relation between the substantive and the attributive, but perception becomes only of that which exists \* \* “सन्मात्रविषयकम्” Some of the Western psychologists also admit that the subject recognizes the object, because the object is one with the subject Regarding the process of recognition, the scientist-philosopher Whitehead said “The awareness of an object as same factor is what I call recognition \* \* Recognition is an awareness of sameness” Some of the Critical Realists also admit it But the Vedantic conception is more rational and critical

## BHAGAVAD GITA

The *Bhagavad Gita* says,

अविनाशि तु तद्विद्धि येन सर्वं 'मिदं' ततम् ।

बिनाशमन्यस्यास्य न कश्चित् कर्तुं मर्हति ॥ २ १७

That is, 'but know that to be imperishable by which all this is pervaded None can cause the destruction of that *Atman*, the 'Inexhaustible' The *Atman* or *Brahman* is known as *Sat*, the Real, by which all this universe, including *akasha*, is pervaded by *akasha* or space The *Atman* does not undergo the changes of increase and decrease, and is, therefore, inexhaustible

The *Atman* in the form of vital energy (*pranasakti*) pervades everything of the universe All materials senses mind, and intellect draw force or energy from the *pranasakti* and the expansion of this energy is known as evolution or *srsti*

The scientists have noticed that the vast universe is covered by atoms and molecules, i.e., by electrons, and even an inch-space is not devoid of atoms and molecules The *pranasakti* saturates and animates all the atoms and molecules, and there is vibration in them The *pranasakti* or *Prana* is non-different from *Prajna* and *Atman* The *Atman* is the *Brahman* In the *Upamshad*, it has been said that the whole universe is pervaded by the *Brahman* The *Brahman* assumes through *maya* the forms of the individual souls, world, God, and others The idea of non-difference is knowledge or *jnana*, and idea of difference is non-knowledge or *ajnana* Unreality or *ajnana* is known as false knowledge In the *Adhyasa-bhasya*, Sankara defined *ajnana* or *adhyasa* as '*atasminstad-buddhih*, i.e., we consider unreality or reality for superimposition As for example, we mistakenly take an oyster as a silver, or a rope as a snake, and this mistaken knowledge is non-knowledge or *ajnana* We see or take the unreal world as real, but, in truth, the world being ever-changing, is unreal (*mithya* or *asat*) In reality, the existence of the gross universe is meaningless, if we do not consider that existence belongs to the undying immortal *Atman* or *Brahman* When divine

realization (*pratyakshanubhuti*) happens, we feel that the existence of the universe is non-different from the existence of the *Atman* or the *Brahman*<sup>1</sup> The *Brahman* is known as *sat-chit-ananda* or existence-consciousness-bliss In the *Upanishad*, the *Brahman* has been called *Sat*, i.e., pure Existence So, if we realize that the universe is pervaded by the existence of the *Brahman*, then we will also realize that the *Brahman* only exists, and all things of the universe being pervaded by the existence of the *Brahman* (including the universe) are non-different from the *Brahman* A realized soul sees, i.e., feels the universe as the *Brahman*, as a scientist feels that all material objects are the product of spirit or energy The direct realists may not admit it, but the idealists, or the spiritualists, see everything as manifestation of spirit or energy It should be remembered that in this world of experience, we mainly admit two methods or theories, *realism* and *idealism* *Realism* maintains the realistic attitude of mind, which is the instinctive belief or vision of man, it is, therefore, as old as man *Realism* maintains that the external existence of the objects is independent of the mind or perceiving subject, whereas *idealism* maintains that the existence of the external objects absolutely depends on the knowing or perceiving mind or subject These two methods of knowledge or experience are quite different from each other Realistic attitude is common to majority of people, while idealistic attitude can be said to be a reactionary one *Idealism*, in the metaphysical sense, is the theory that ultimate reality is spiritual, and it is

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<sup>1</sup> In the *Upanishad*, we find both the names, *Atman* and *Brahman* as the supreme Principle The *Atman* is generally taken as the universal Principle lying in the heart of the individual (*vyasti*) souls whereas the *Brahman* is considered as the prime-Principle that shines as the universal (*samasti*) One However, Dr A K Sarkar said 'The expressions, *Atman* and *Brahman* are not concepts but meditative conditions to be accepted for understanding the apparent aspect or orders of experience To illustrate, the *Atman*, as transcendent pure consciousness is that meditative condition or unchanging persistent non-reflective background which renders manifest distinctive feature of the waking dream and deep states Similarly, the term, *Brahman*, as transcendent pure existence, is that subtle meditative basis which controls and makes manifest the apparent processes, material, vital, mental, intellectual, and blissful

"Between the meditative processes of the *Atman* and *Brahman*, there is non-duality this kind of meditative experience is developed by the *upanishadic thinkers in general*"—Vide *Changing Phases of Buddhist Thought* (1968), pp 23

thus opposed to realism or materialism and even to neutralism. But, in its epistemological sense, *idealism* is the view that objects of knowledge or experience are not independent of the knower, and it is thus opposed to epistemological realism. Metaphysical idealism is very often based on epistemological idealism, as in Berkeley, but it should be remembered that epistemological idealism logically leads up to the metaphysical idealism, though metaphysical idealism is not incompatible with epistemological realism. One may believe that the object of knowledge or experience is independent of the mind or knower, and yet he comes to the conclusion on other grounds that the knower and the object known are all spiritual at bottom. *Realism* is revived in modern times among the Western thinkers through a reaction against absolute idealism, and it is also true that modern realism draws its sustenance from different forms of ancient realism. Modern realism has flourished most in Great Britain and America, and then influence crossed the Atlantic, and helped also the foundation of American realism. The British thinkers themselves were also influenced by some German realists. However, these two theories of knowledge, *realism* and *idealism*, again admit of various types and degrees, based mainly on two trends of thoughts that the objects may be held to be wholly independent of and distinct from the mind and wholly dependent and non-distinct from the mind.<sup>1</sup> But when we

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<sup>1</sup> Regarding the nature of knowledge or experience there are different schools, *realistic* and *idealistic*. The realistic schools are *Naïve* or *popular realism* which believes in the reality of the external objects and their qualities, colour, sound, taste, smell, etc. (2) *Scientific* or *critical realism* believes in the reality of the external material objects with their primary qualities, extension, size, etc. (3) *New realism* or *neo realism* is a reaction against idealism, subjective and objective. New realism believes in the reality of the external objects independently of the perceiving minds, finite and infinite. Its primary, secondary and tertiary qualities, beauty and ugliness are real and independent of the minds.

The idealistic schools are (1) *Subjective idealism* which denies the existence of matter and its primary and secondary qualities and regards them as mere sensations of the perceiving mind. It is called mentalism, or subjectivism. (2) *Phenomenalist* or *critical idealism* believes in the reality of the unknown and unknowable thing-in-itself or noumena and confines knowledge to phenomena or appearances only. (3) *Objective idealism* believes in the reality of the external world which is evolved by the Absolute Mind according to the same categories as are applied by the finite minds to it. It regards the finite souls as finite reproductions of the Absolute Spirit. Thus objective

know the universe as gross and lifeless and also as non-different from the Spirit or Brahman, then these theories or methods of knowledge or experience seem defective and unreal. Sankara called the defective unreal knowledge known as *brahma* or false mistaken knowledge. Because, an essence, all things or objects in this universe are non-different from the all-intelligence and all-consciousness Brahman.

You do not know the real essence of the universe, and as you do not know, you think that the universe is dying and decaying. And for that reason you consider matter as different from spirit. But, in truth, matter or material world is no other than spirit or *Atman*. I have discussed it in my book *Self-Knowledge* (vide the chapter I, 'Spirit and matter') that spirit and matter have always been subjects for discussion in science, philosophy, and religion. The conclusions of different thinkers of different schools maintaining different viewpoints have given foundation to the various explanations of the universe, which can be classified under three heads, the *spiritualistic* or *idealistic*, the *materialistic*, and the *monistic* theories. The *spiritualistic* or *idealistic theory* claims that all material objects, and it denies the existence of matter as distinct or separate from the mode or condition of spirit or mind. The *materialistic theory* of the universe is maintained by a large majority of the scientists, physicists, chemists, medical practitioners, and the evolutionists of the present

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idealism believes in the reality and ideality of the external world. Sankara and Kant maintain this school of subjective idealism, whereas the Yogachari Buddhists maintain the subjective idealistic school. But generally it is believed that Kant maintains the *phenomenalistic idealism*, whereas Fichte maintains *absolute idealism*. Schelling believes in *transcendental idealism*, whereas Hegel maintains *objective idealism*. Besides, there are *personal idealism* maintained by Rashdall, Ward, Howison, and others. Schopenhauer believes in *voluntaristic idealism*, which affirms the 'primacy of the will' over the intellect and converted Hegel's Absolute into the Absolute Will. The *new realism* (neo realism) is maintained by Holt, Marvin, Montague, Perry, Pitkin and Spaulding, whereas *new critical realism* is maintained by Strong, Rogers, Sanatyrna, Sellers, Pratt, Drake and others. Besides William James, Schiller and Dewey are the exponents of *pragmatism*. When Swami Abhedananda was in America, there was a historical discussion on philosophy on the subject *Unity in Variety* between Swami Abhedananda and Prof. William James for three and half hours. Prof. Royce, Prof. Howison, Prof. Jackson and others were present there. Prof. James also met Swami Vivekananda and Prof. James has mentioned the name of Swami Vivekananda in his book, *Pragmatism*.

time They try to deduce everything from matter, and claim spirit is the outcome or product of matter

But what is matter? Has anybody ever seen matter? Really we do not see matter, but we see only colour Is colour the same as matter? No, colour is quality or attribute (*guna*) Now, where does this colour exist? You will say that it exists in a flower, or in an object But the physiologists explain that colour which is perceived, does not exist as such in the flower, but that is a *sensation* caused by a certain order of vibrations coming in contact with our consciousness through the medium of the optic nerve In fact, the perception of colour is compound effect produced by vibrations of ether, which, entering through the eyes, create another set of vibrations in the brain-cells, and these vibrations when translated by the conscious entity, are called *sensations* Colour is, therefore, the result of the blending of the objective and subjective elements Thus we can conclude that colour does not rest in the flower, but depends upon the retina, optic nerves, and brain-cells as well, so it cannot be the same as matter Again it can be remembered that quality or category or attribute being an adjunct, always creates a division between it and the object, to which it belongs So if we wish to see the matter as non-different from the spirit, we will have to change our viewpoints

Mind is like a blotting paper As a blotting paper soaks or absorbs all the spots of ink thrown upon it, so mind soaks all the spots of impressions of all thoughts and actions, done in one's life, and in this way the blotting paper of the mind is filled up The Western philosopher David Hume called these spots as sensations or impressions, which themselves are isolated or loose Hume found no connecting link to hold up the isolated sensations or impressions together, so he said that the loose sensations or impressions always fly in the sphere of the mind like the patches of the clouds in the sky

David Hume denied the existence of a soul, or of an ego, as a separate entity other than the sensations He said that he did not find what was further required to make him a perfect non entity, so he carried his psychology and philosophy into an absolute nihilism or nothingness In fact, Hume reduced the mind to the series of its impressions and

ideas. He also reduced objects to a series of impressions and ideas, and said that nothing exists other than a bundle of impressions or ideas which may be held together by some mysterious force, and there is left nothing else. It was Kant, who afterwards had made a revival of true philosophy from another viewpoint, because Hume explained that as the clouds float in the eternal void one after another so the bundles of impressions or ideas pass like fluxes, and, therefore, there is no linking principle. Kant really aroused Hume from his dogmatic slumber by admitting an intelligent ego as the ground of these isolated impressions or ideas. Kant said that no sensation or perception is possible until and unless we admit a linking ground as a conscious ego of the isolated flying impressions. Kant believed in both the subjective world and the objective world on the basis of the two principles, subject and object. Kant's view was that distinction between subject and object cannot be arrived at without the activity of the mind. If the mind had only one single representation given to it, it could not make out whether that representation was mental or physical, subjective or objective. We also realize the ego or self in its activity. The activity of the ego or self as contrasted with the activity of what is apprehended is in its turn the object of apprehension inasmuch as we are aware that the unity of the acts of our apprehending—from each of which the apprehended content is inseparable—is other than the order and unity which belongs to the apprehended. Kant said, it is true that all apprehension or perception of the manifold as we consciously experience it, is already ordered synthesis. The given is then never experienced as such. We cannot be aware of a manifold as a manifold except in virtue of the mind's synthesis of those isolated elements. Therefore, this synthesis must be operative before consciousness. All mental activity of any kind then is synthesis working on *a priori* principles and is, therefore, judgement. Judgement is the unit of thought and of all mental activity. This doctrine of Kant's is so novel that it is seldom understood.<sup>1</sup> Fichte and Schelling also admitted this theory of Kant.

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<sup>1</sup> Empiricism logically carried out leads to sensationism and scepticism. Hume was a consistent empiricist. He showed that



Similar instance we find in the Buddhist philosophy. The *Khamka-vijnananavadin* Buddhist who believe that everything in this universe is momentary, and there is no permanent or constant thing like an ego or *Atman*, say, that there is a stream of consciousness, in which one particular unit of consciousness or sensation, or feeling, idea is always in flux. Just as in a river, for instance, we see a continuous flow of water, and if we look at a point in that stream, we see water is there, but the same particle of water that we saw just a minute ago or half a second ago, is gone, and its place is taken by another quality of water. Thus we see that it is constantly changing, but a portion of it, or the unchangeable stream, is left there, which is carried on, and a portion is eliminated, but the continuity is kept up, and it is a matter of quantity. But those Buddhists did not search further to

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experience gave only discrete impressions and ideas, which were combined with one another by the laws of association, viz, resemblance, contiguity and causation, and that it did not give the knowledge of matter, mind, and God, matter as a cluster of actual and possible sensations, mind being a series of fleeting ideas, feelings and volitions, and God being a fiction of the imagination, produced by unfulfilled wishes. Hume, therefore, denied the reality of matter, mind, and God, and advanced *scepticism* (*nastikyavada*). There is also the scepticism of the Greek Sophists.

But scepticism is an intolerable attitude of the mind, and is not a rational method of philosophy. So Immanuel Kant appeared, and proposed criticism as the method of philosophy. Kant recognized the claims of experience and rationalism, and defined the limits of knowledge. Kant said that experience gives the discrete manifold of sensations which constitute the matter of knowledge. Reason gives the forms of knowledge, which are applied to the matter, and organizes it into system of knowledge.

Kant maintained that there are noumena or things-in-themselves. In this sense, Kant was a realist. Further he maintained that things-in-themselves exist outside and independent of the mind, and they are unknown and unknowable. They act upon the noumenal self and produce discrete impressions. The self or ego arranges them in time and space which are the categories and forms of intuition. The self, in fact, arranges the categorised sensations under the regulative ideas of reason viz world, soul and God and reduces them to a unity. World, soul and God, said Kant, are not real but merely regulative ideals or 'Ideas', which help us reduce the manifold of sensations to a unity. We know only phenomena, said Kant, by pure reason or theoretical reason, so his doctrine is called *phenomenalism* or *phenomenalist idealism*. But Kant maintained the practical reason which gives us morality which postulates freedom of the soul, immortality of the soul and the existence of God as moral governor. Vide Dr J N Sinha *Introduction to Philosophy* (1961) pp 73-90. Will Durant *The Story of Philosophy* (1957), Prof Patrick *Introduction to Philosophy* (1935).

go beyond the changeable flux of the mental state, because they really deny the existence of an ego or soul as an entity, distinct from the isolated ideas or sensations, or thoughts. Acharya Sankara appeared and solved the problem admitting an intelligent and constant ego or *Atman* which formed the background of the isolated thoughts or ideas, like passing clouds, as advanced by the *Kshanika-vijnanavadin* Buddhists (Yogacharis). Vedanta forwarded that mind may be known as a bundle of sensations or ideas, but it itself is an inert (*jada*) instrument, so until and unless the shining ego or *Atman* illumines the mind with consciousness, it cannot do any work. Again, as the mind is illumined and inspired by the *Atman*, so it exists behind the senses, and the senses becomes active. The illumined conscious mind then directs and makes active all the senses. So, if we control the mind, the senses will automatically be controlled, because cause being controlled, effect is checked or controlled.

### KATHA UPANISHAD

The *Katha-Upanishad* begins with discussions on philosophy and religion with a story of Nachiketa, who went to the after world (*paraloka*) with his mortal body and came back as an immortal soul. Nachiketa went to the King of Death (Yama) who was a Self-realized Being. He approached that Being who was the embodiment of the *Upanishad*, and afterwards came back to this mortal mundane world with the undying transcendental knowledge of the *Atman*. Now, what is *Upanishad*? The word *Upanishad* is derived from *upa* (near) and *ni* (with certainty) as prefixes, and *kvip* as a suffix to the root *sad*, meaning to split up (destroy), go (reach, attain), or loosen (*upa+kvip+ni+sad* — *Upanishad*). The *Upanishad* is the supreme or transcendental knowledge, and if any one comes near to, or comes in contact with, this supreme knowledge, it destroys the darkness of ignorance or nescience. Sankara said that the supreme knowledge is called the *Upanishad* by virtue of its association with the significance of this knowledge that splits up, injures, or destroys the seed of worldly existence which is ignorance, in the case of those seekers of Truth and

emancipation, who, after becoming detached from the desires for the seen and the unseen objects, approach (*upa-sad*), the knowledge which is called *Upanishad*, and who is then deliberated on it with steadiness and certainty (*ni*)

Nachiketa was the son of Vajashriava Vajashriava being desirous of fruit, performed a Visvajit sacrifice and gave away everything of his property to the Brahmins. He also gave away the cows that drank not water and ate not grass, and whose milk was milked for the last time, and lost their organs. At that time, boy Nachiketa approached his father and asked "Father, to whom will you offer me", Nachiketa spoke to his father a second time and a third time. To that, his father, being annoyed, said to Nachiketa "To Death I offer you", Nachiketa did not give any reply to his father, but he became ready to proceed to the *Yamaloka*. He went to Death's abode, but Death was not present at that time, so he waited for three nights outside, without taking any food and water. The ministers of Death (Yama) did not know how to deal with the guest. However, Death returned, and heard everything from his ministers. Death was given a warning "A Brahmana guest enters the houses like fire, so he should be sympathetically treated". So Death approached Nachiketa with adoration, and said "O Brahmana, since you have lived in my abode for three nights without food, a guest and an adorable person as you are, let my salutations be to you, and let good accrue to me by averting the fault arising that lapse. Ask for three boons—one in respect of each night"

To that Nachiketa said "O Death, of the three boons I ask this one as the first, viz, that my father, Gautama may become

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<sup>3</sup> This story of Nachiketa and Yama, the Lord of Death, happens also in the *Taittiriya Brahmana* (III 11 8) and the *Mahabharata* (*anushasana-parva* 1063). The story as depicted in the *Taittiriya Br* is similar to that in the *Katha-Upanishad*, but the story as depicted in the *Mahabharata* differs. There, in the *anushasana-parva* (106), it has been stated that before entering into the Kingdom of Death, Nachiketa died and entered into the *Yamaloka* with his luminous subtle body. This story of Nachiketa has been described in connection with the prize of the gift of the cows (*gorana-prashanāparatva*). Nachiketa was offered with wealth and happiness of *Svaraloka* which were refused. Ramanuja said in the commentary that *Svaraloka* lies in between *Suraloka* and *Dhruvaloka* and it is the indirect meaning whereas the direct meaning is the attaining of the Immortality. Sankara entirely discarded any kind of *loka* which is in time space and causation.

freed from anxiety, calm of mind, freed from anger towards me, and he may recognise me, and talk to me when freed by you"

Let us see what is difference between an ordinary common man and an uncommon divine man. The seed of the Divinity is within every individual, and all the living souls are no other than the all intelligent Brahman, but, yet there are some differences in the manifestations of the Divinity. Though the sun throws its rays equally on all the beings and objects, yet its manifestation on mirror, or on water, differs from that on stone, or on earth, so one and the same Divinity shines in all the objects, sentient and insentient, yet its manifestation differs in different things or objects. According to the theory of evolution, every living being is marching onward towards better manifestation and at last reach the summit, which can be said to be the human being, possessed of intellect, power of understanding, and intuition. But, in the human world, there are grades of evolution, which are called material, ethical, and spiritual. An ordinary man becomes a God-man after passing through the material, ethical, and spiritual planes by gradual progress. In the human world, we also find a dull and unintelligent man by the side of an intelligent man. What is the cause of this variation? This variation explains the lesser and greater manifestations of one and the same intelligence in two beings, and it means that in one, intelligence is partially manifested, whereas, in the other, it is fully manifested, though intelligence itself neither increases, nor decreases, but remains the same. Similarly, the *Atman*, the source of intelligence and consciousness, shines in every living and non-living beings, but its outward manifestation differs from one another because of name and form which are *ajnana*. These name and form (*nama-rupa*) create difference in the beings, and these categories of name and form further delude the beings in the form of *maya* or nescience. In fact, the categories are the concrete structures of name and form, and these, in other words, are the cause of creating greater or lesser manifestation in men. So we should struggle hard to go beyond the categories of name and form, and then we shall realize that the one and the same *Atman* shines itself in its own undying

glory and sublimity in every being

Now, regarding the *Devas*, it can be said that by dint of their good works they have attained their higher stages or status. The heavens are not situated in the sky like the imaginary castles, but they are on the earth, but we through our imagination think them as the regions where there is no sorrow, suffering, crying, or trouble. The dualists and especially the performers of actions like the sacrifices believe in some highest regions where the *Devas* live and also the holy ones enjoy eternal peace. The Bhaktas also conceive a highest *loka* in the heaven, where there the souls feel no thirst and hunger, and that highest *loka* is known as the Baikuntha, where Narayana, the Lord of the universe, lives with his divine consort, Lakshmi. But Advaita Vedanta says that any kind of *loka* or region is under the sway of nescience, and that means the *lokas* or regions are not permanent like the *Atman* or Brahman which suffers no limiting category of attribute or adjunct.

When Death or the Ruler of Death, found that Nachiketa did not ask anything other than the knowledge of the *Atman*, he was very much pleased, and said to Nachiketa,

अन्यच्छ्रेयोऽन्यदुतैव प्रेय-

स्ते उभे नानार्थे पुरुषं सिनीत ।

युयोः श्रेय आददानस्य साधु

भवति, हीयतेऽर्थादय उ प्रेयो वृणीते ॥ १ । २ १

That is, after testing Nachiketa, Yama found his fitness for knowledge, and said 'the preferable is different indeed, and so, indeed, is the pleasurable different. These two, serving divergent purposes, (as they do), bind men. Good befalls him who accepts the preferable out of these two. He who selects the pleasurable, falls from the true end. Really all worldly men are impelled by these two, *shreya* and *preya*, under an idea of personal duty, for according as one hankers after prosperity or immortality, one engages in the pleasurable, or the preferable. These two, phenomenal prosperity and eternal immortality, are opposed to each other, inasmuch as they are of the nature of knowledge and ignorance. Sankara in his commentary on the theory of superimposition (*adhyasa-*

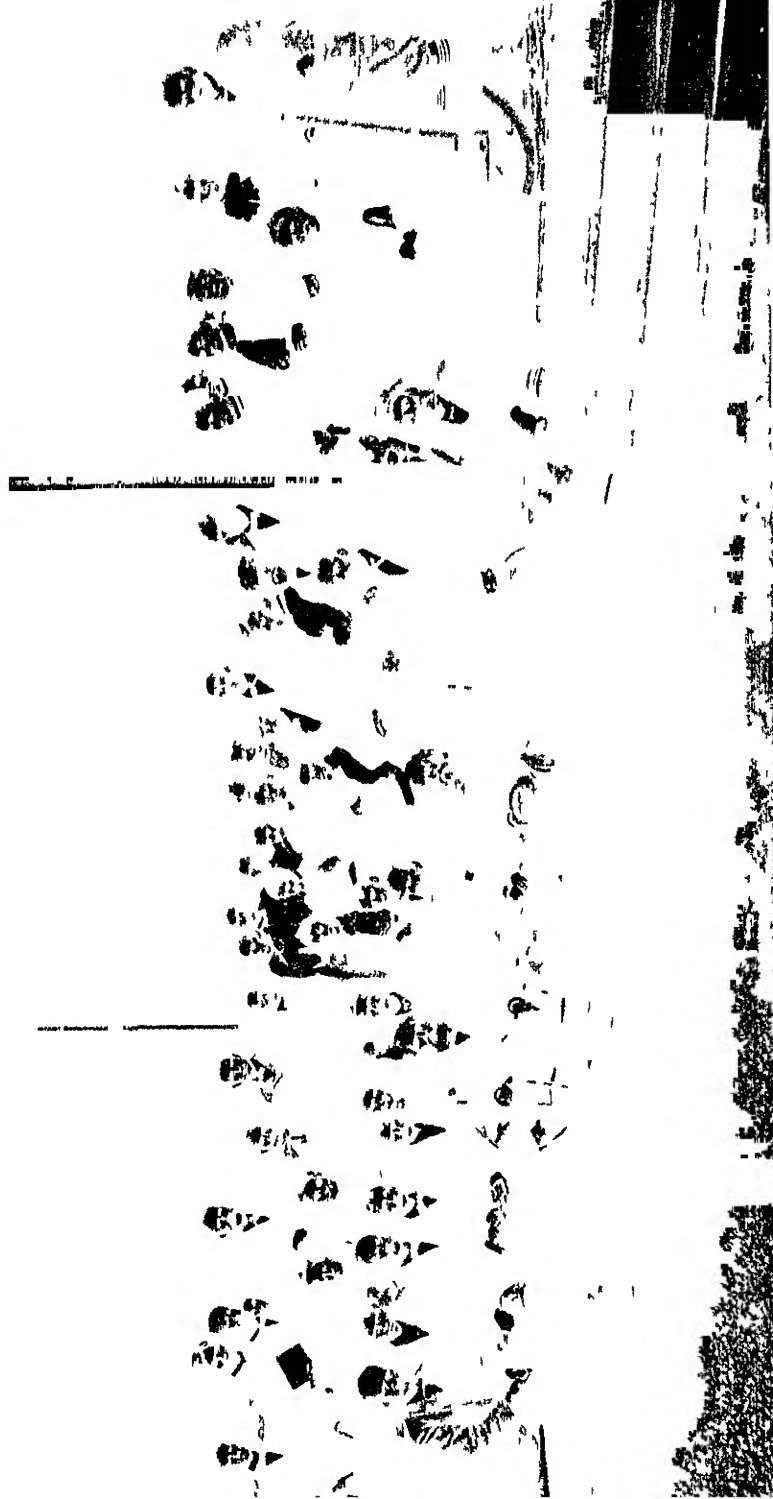
*bhasya*) said that those two things are opposed to each other, inasmuch as they are of the names of light and darkness. But men and women being deluded by the inscrutable nature of nescience or *avidya*, want mortality instead of immortality

The two opposite things or paths are known as the preferable (*shreya*) and the pleasurable (*preya*). The word *shreya* connotes the idea of absolute emancipation of the individual soul which is imprisoned in the material body. Ignorance is a predominant factor in this world of changing phenomena. *Ajnana* is known as *avidya* or non-knowledge, and *jnana* which removes delusion or ignorance, is known as knowledge. The philosophers have called ignorance (*ajnana*) as a covering (i.e., that which covers the light of the *Atman*) and knowledge (*jnana*) as the removal of the covering. *Preya* or the pleasurable is that which gives men and women pleasures which are phenomenal, unreal and temporary, and its opposite thing is *shreya* or the preferable, which is transcendental, real and permanent. In the highest sense, *shreya* is the attainment of the eternal knowledge of the immortal *Atman*. So the real aspect of *shreya* is attainable, so as to enchain the soul from the bondage of nescience (*ajnana*) and to enjoy permanent peace and happiness.

I travelled all over India, the whole Continents of Europe, China, Japan, and other near and distant countries, and everywhere I found the people are mad in running all the time after ephemeral phenomenal objects. They do not turn their eyes towards the eternal object of life, which is the *Atman*. They are sleeping, as if, the sleep of delusion, and have drunk the wine of attachments to phenomenal objects. Sadhaka Ramaprasad had sung "Full many a gem are scattered in the courtyard of Chintamani, and ordinary men and women only collect them and do not pay attention to collect the precious stones lying inside the chamber of him." This is the magic play of Mahamaya, and if all men and women wish to get the blessings of Chintamani, then the play of Mahamaya will be meaningless. Again, if any fortunate one dedicates himself to the feet of Mahamaya, she rescues the devotee from the bondage of ignorance. Sri Ramakrishna said that Mahamaya (*maya*) has no power to directly confer absolute bliss on any-



Swami Abhedananda in Madras in 1906 with Swami Ramakrishnananda and Swami Paramananda



Swami Abhedananda with the Professors and the educationalists ( California )



one, but she takes the devotee to the door of Chintamani, and Chintamani, the *Atman*, rescues the devotee

The *Katha-Upanishad* says,

श्रेयश्च प्रयश्च सनुष्यमेत-

स्तौ सम्परोक्षं विविनक्ति वीर ।

श्रेयो हि धीरोऽपि प्रयसो वृणीते

प्रयो मन्दो योगक्षमाद् वृणीते ॥ १।२।२

The preferable and the pleasurable approach mankind. The man of intelligence, having considered them, separates the two. The intelligent one selects the electable in preference to the delectable, the non intelligent one selects the delectable for the sake of growth and protection of the body, etc'. For the ordinary men it is difficult to discriminate the real from the unreal, or the permanent from the impermanent. The Jnanis are just like the duck. When milk is mixed with water, the duck can separate the milk from water. Similarly, the Jnanis can discriminate the real from the unreal in this world of unreality. The Jnanis can separate the preferable from the pleasurable, if they are mixed together. Similarly, in this world of pleasure and pain, the Jnanis prefer pleasure instead of pain, nay, the real Jnanis discard both pleasure and pain, because pleasure and pain being relative, are unreal. The ignorant do quite opposite, and are like the camel to eat the thorny grass although bloods come out of their mouth. The worldly men also follow the similar method, and though they are fully conscious of the impermanent nature of the phenomenal pleasure, yet they cannot avoid them, and consequently, suffer all the life. This kind of desire or attraction can be known as delusion. Moreover, the *samskaras*, accumulated in the past and present incarnations, compel them to proceed in the wrong path, and they cannot do anything if they desire to do otherwise. It can be said to be a weakness, and for this weakness and wrong notion, they cannot realize that they are, in essence, pure, intelligent, free, immortal, and eternal, and are above all sorrows and sufferings. They become so weak that they cannot even try to realize that transcending state of the *Atman*. Their minds cannot think of these things but the time will come when they will regain their lost power

and knowledge, and then they will come to know that they are the birthless and deathless immortal *Atman*. This kind of regaining knowledge of the *Atman* can be known as *recognition* (*pratyabhijñāna*). Vedānta says that *recognition* dispells the darkness of ignorance or nescience. This divine *recognition* is said to be the real knowledge, or the knowledge of the *Atman*. After attaining to the knowledge of the *Atman*, an enlightened soul can live in this world of nescience, and then the world seems to him as a place of real pleasure (*maṇḍūkūṭa*). The Jñanis also live and move in this world of delusion and the world cannot bind them. That state of perfect release appears to the Jñani as a field of play of hide and seek, because they are free forever and ever by touching the neutral man (*buru*), the *Atman* in the play of the world. The enlightened souls perfectly enjoy the play of the world by touching the supreme Being, God the Absolute, and then nothing can pollute them. Then they live in this world, and take pleasure in everything in this world like a witness (*saksi*), being unaffected by all things, phenomenal and mental. It is true that real pleasure comes when a man witnesses the play of this world disinterestedly. So it is our duty to achieve the real preferable (*śhreya*) leaving aside the pleasurable that binds men in the net of delusion or *mayā*.

### MISCELLANEOUS

Swami Abhedananda says: Will-power is the doer and director of everything, and the source of the will-power is mind. Kant said that the seat of thinking, feeling and willing—these three psychic functions are the ego or self, and ego or self is composed of the stuff of the mind. Tantra says that *jñāna*, *icchā*, and *kriyā*,—these inner activities are the ingredients of the mind, behind which the *prāṇasakti* or vital energy exists. Tantra philosophy says that this *Sakti* or energy is the divine Energy who co-exists with the all-intelligence and all-consciousness Siva. Siva and *Sakti*—the static Energy and the dynamic Energy are like the coupled I-consciousness and It-consciousness (*aham-chaitanya* and *idam chaitanya*) which form the undivided secondless entity of the Brahman. This Brahman is

the cause and ground of everything of the material, mental, and spiritual world. The will-power (*icchāsakti*) in its individual (*vyasti*) aspect, performs everything of the universe, composed of the categories of space, time, and causation, and the will-power in its collective (*samasti*) divine aspect, becomes the cause of creation, i.e., evolution of this vast universe, with its sentient and insentient objects. In individual way, the will-power instigates or inspires men, women, and animals in their field of work, makes them active, and bring success or failure unto them. Good or bad happens to them as a consequence of their works, but the will-power remains at the root. In the *Upamśhad*, we find that the Brahman (determinate) willed, and as a result of will, the one and secondless Brahman become the many or manifold.

Therefore can a man do everything through will-power? The Swami says, yes, infinite possibilities lie latent in a man or a woman, and through intense desire or will, he or she can do and undo everything through the power of will. It is a fact that a man creates something means he manifests something which remained unmanifested in the limitless store of his subconscious or unconscious mind. We should remember what power exists in the macrocosm, exists also in the microcosm. A man is the universe in miniature form, and, therefore, infinite power slumbers in the bosom of his submerged mind. Ordinary man does not know the secret, so he thinks himself little and powerless. The individual will-power is again non-different from the universal will-power, which is known as the *Prakṛiti*, or primordial Energy. So if a man realizes that his real source is the infinite and eternal *Prakṛiti*, he can manifest everything greater or smaller. Vedānta also says that the individual soul (*jīva*) is no other than the universal Soul, the Brahman. The *Prakṛiti* appears different from the Brahman for its stuff and function. Her stuff is the accumulated infinite *samāskāras* of the living and non-living beings and objects, which are the seeds of creation or manifestation, and its function is to create or manifest the manifold appearance. But when she loses its forms of stuff and function, she is identified with the causeless and groundless Brahman. Śrī Rāmakṛishṇa said that whom you say Kālī, the dynamic divine Energy, I call her the Brahman. In the form of Kālī or divine Energy, she functions as the

Creator or Creatrix, and, in the form of Brahman, she creates nothing, but shines as non-different from the one and secondless Brahman. Really *brahmamayee* Kālī is the *leelāmaya* Brahman. When dynamic, the Brahman or Siva is known as Sakti or Kālī. So it is said that from the viewpoint of evolution or projection (*sruti*), the indeterminate and formless (*nirguna* and *nirakara*) Brahman appears as determinate and with form (*saguna* and *sakara*), but, Sri Ramakrishna said "One and the same supreme Brahman in itself assumes both the forms of the determinate Brahman and the indeterminate Brahman. *Nitya* (transcendental essence) and *līlā* (immanent sportive playful principle)—these two aspects belong to one and the same supreme Brahman or Reality. This realization (*anubhuti*) does not come to them who are in the abyss of darkness of ignorance, but comes to those who are enlightened, and have risen above all kinds of controversy of isms, creeds and beliefs, and have realized the absolute Truth.

Do not think that as a man creates many things through his will power, so he can create the universe and all phenomenal objects like God, the Creator. A man may be considered as a creator in miniature form, but he cannot be raised in the status of the all-powerful omnipresent and omniscient God. A man can beget his children, can build houses or palaces, and can hoard immense wealth, but he cannot create men and women and animals and trees, creepers, rivers, seas and oceans. A man cannot create the solar system with the sun, moon, and stars, but he only enjoys them as an onlooker, and is surprised with the magnificent creation of God, the all-powerful highest Principle. But do not miss the point that in essence or in reality you are non-different from God. The same Brahman-consciousness shines not only in God, but shines also in you and I, and in all the living and non-living beings. A great pyre of fire may appear greater in size and magnitude than little part of the great fire, but in potency and power, a great pyre and a bit of fire are the same. As for example, as a bit of fire can destroy a great city, so can a great pyre of fire. The Brahman consciousness fully shines in the heart of everyone, so from the viewpoint of consciousness, individual pure consciousness and God-consciousness are one and the same. The difference between them appears only

to them who are in ignorance or *avidya*. Through the differentiating power of *avidya*, men think themselves as different from God (*Isvara*)

While discussing about God and the individual souls (*Isvara* and *jiva*), Swami Abhedananda says, that an individual soul is like a reflection (*pratibimba*) of God (*bimba*). As the reflected face of a man in the mirror or water is no other than the face of a real man, so an individual soul and all the beings of the universe are the reflection of one and the same self-shining Brahman. Sankara and the followers of the Vivarana school are the upholders of the theory of reflection (*pratibimvavada*) whereas Vachaspati Mishra and others are the *avacchidavadis*. The *pratiwimbhavadis* say that the idea of difference between God and the individual souls are superimposed (*adhyasta*), and viewing from the pure consciousness, both God and the individual souls are non-different. But men think themselves as ignorant and limited due to nescience or *avidya*. This nescience is known as non-knowledge or *ajnana*, and knowledge of *jnana* is that which dispels the darkness and ignorance, and makes men realize that he is not in bondage, but is free, birthless and deathless, and is eternal and immortal.

## CHAPTER XXXXI

### ÂMĀR JIVANKATHĀ (MY LIFE-STORY)

*Âmār Jivankathā* or *My Life-Story* is an autobiography of Swami Abhedananda, in Bengali. We do not know the exact time from whence he commenced to write it. So far it is known he wrote his life's account up to 1895 A.D., i.e., from his birth to his retirement to Almorah after his hard work of arranging the Town Hall Meeting (5th September, 1898), in memory of Swami Vivekananda's remarkable success at the Parliament of Religions that met at Chicago in September 1893. And, therefore, it can be said that *Âmār Jivankathā* records in truth the life-history of Swami Abhedananda for a period of nineteen years, i.e., from 2nd October, 1866 to 1895. The remaining portion (i.e., the life-incidents from 1896 to 1939) is yet unwritten, or will be completed afterwards.

Swami Abhedananda's life-story begins with "My father Rasikalal Chandra was born in 1822 at Calcutta. He lived at 22, Nimu Goswami Lane. When Rammohan Roy died in Bristol (London) on 27th September, 1833, my father's age was only ten. He (my father) passed the Seminar Examination and was appointed as a professor of English in the Oriental Seminary, established by Gaurmohan Adya, which is still in existence at Upper Chitpur Road. There he spent twenty-five years in teaching," and is ended with "However, after spending some months in Almorah, I again returned to the Alambazar Math on foot. On reaching the Alambazar Math, I heard the repeated success of my spiritual brother Swami Vivekananda in America and felt proud. But it was not at all a miracle to Narendranath the beloved son of Sri Ramakrishna. His success was due to the infinite power and grace of his Acharya Sri Ramakrishna. He owned the world-wide fame for the grace of Thakur."

Now, we are publishing the translation of some of the hand-written notes as genuine record of his own life, which will reveal the truth of his Divine revelation or Self-realization (*brahmanubhuti*). We are also forwarding the English translations of the records regarding Sannyasa initiation of the Swami and of his other brother disciples, along with those of the incidents of meditation and ecstasy in the night of Sivaratna at Cossipore Garden.

[illegible]





ସୂନିତ୍ ଶାନ୍ତି ଗର୍ଭରୁ ଜାୟେ ସାର୍ବଜନୀନ । ଏକମା  
ତ୍ରୋପ୍ୟ ନାନା ଭାଷାରେ ପାରିତୋଷ ।

[illegible]

ਸਿਰਗਾਸ਼

[illegible]

## ENGLISH TRANSLATION

1 One day, I asked my mother the direction to Ram Rasmanis Kalibari at Dakshineswar, and so my mother thought that I had gone to Dakshineswar. She, therefore, requested my father to go to Dakshineswar in order to enquire about me and my father did not also neglect the request of my mother. Next morning he proceeded to Dakshineswar and reached there immediately after my departure from that place. Being sure about my whereabouts my father was somewhat restful, and requested Paramahansa-deva for convincing me to marry as soon as possible. Paramahansa-deva told my father "Your son is a perfect Yogi and does not wish to marry, so if you force him to marry, what result can you expect?" Afterwards my father told Paramahansa-deva "Service to parents is the greatest ideal of religion." Paramahansa-deva was very much pleased to hear it. But my father did not understand at that time that Paramahansa-deva had already shown me the path towards God, the Father of the universe.

When I returned home I heard that my mother had already sent my father to Dakshineswar Kalibari in search of me. My father returned home after two or three hours of my arrival. Then everything was alright.

2 However, I felt great attraction to go to Dakshineswar again. When I used to sit for meditation in my home, I saw divine forms of different deities. Everyday I used to see new deities in my meditation. One day I saw the Omnipotent Eye of the all-pervading God. From time to time I used to visit Dakshineswar and tell everything about my divine vision to Paramahansa-deva. One day I saw another vision which was really divine, and when I related it to Paramahansa-deva about it, he told me, "thus you have seen the Vaikuntha. You have reached the climax of your divine vision, and there remains nothing to be seen from this time." It is a wonderful thing that since then when I used to sit in meditation, my mind used to be very quiet and absorbed in ecstasy, and I found no form of any deity. During this time I felt no attraction of any work at

home, and I always felt intense desire to absorb myself in deep meditation

3 In order to distribute coloured cloths (*geruā*) to the Sadhus proceeding towards the Gangasagar Melā, Gopaldāda had purchased some cloths and prepared them to be coloured with (*gerumati*) Śrī Ramakrishna asked Gopaldāda why he was colouring the cloths Gopaldāda said 'I have bought these cloths for distribution among the Sadhus who have assembled at the Jaganath Ghat on their way to the Gangasagar Melā and so he wished to colour them with *gerumati*' At this Śrī Ramakrishna said "You will get a thousand times better result by distributing the cloths to these boys (the direct disciple of Śrī Ramakrishna) instead of giving them to the Sadhus at the Jagannath Ghat You will never get all-sacrificing Sadhus like these boys, any one of whom is equal to thousand of other Sadhus' Being so advised Gopaldāda clad ourselves with those ochrous cloths From that day we gave up white cloths and being dressed with *geruā* cloths, we went to Śrī Ramakrishna to bow down to him and took his divine blessings Seeing us clad in *geruā*, Thakur's joy knew no bounds In this way he (Śrī Ramakrishna) initiated us in *Sannyāsa*

4 On the day of Sivarātri we all spent in fast without taking even a drop of water and passed the whole night worshipping the Lord Siva, meditating and singing the songs in praise of Siva In the second part of the night, when Narendra and myself sat in meditation, I noticed that all the limbs of Naren's body had been trembling as if those were connected with Electric Battery Naren told me to touch him and see if I could feel any sensation Then I placed my hand on his thigh and greatly felt a magnetic current which made his whole body tremble and gradually that current became so great that my hands also began to tremble Unfortunately this incident has been exaggerated in the Life of Swami Vivekananda, inasmuch as it has been described in that book that in this way Swami introduced the inspiration of knowledge in me But long before that incident by the grace of Thakur (Śrī Ramakrishna), I got my inner eyes opened through his (Thakur's) grace Again I realized the *Ātman*, and thus attained the highest goal of

realization, *brahmanubhūti*. It seems Naren thought that he had accumulated much power for transferring it to other's body. Sri Ramakrishna corrected that idea of Naren afterwards.

Besides the life-stories, Swami Abhedananda has recorded in the eleventh chapter of his *Juankathā*, the religio-philosophical discussions of Sri Ramakrishna, his beloved Master. In the beginning, the Swami has written: 'In astonishment we would observe with wonder his strange God-absorbing state and we would think that Paramahamsadeva was in perfect communion with Divine Mother Bhavatarini and was talking with Her that he would put questions to Her and get answers, that Paramahamsadeva was surely not an ordinary human being, but was a God or God-intoxicated superman. Really, when Sri Ramakrishnadeva attained *nirvikalpa-samadhi* (of Yoga) or *brahmanubhūti* (of Advaita Vedanta *sādhana*), he remembered his Divine mission for the world, which was nothing but the sportive play of Divine *līlā*, and so he prayed to his Mother Bhavatarini: '*Mā amāyā bhāva-mukhe rākh*'. The word *bhāvamukha* connotes the idea of living with *santāna-bhāva*. It is interesting to note that Sri Ramakrishna did everything thinking him as a beloved son of his Mother Brahmanavee Bhavatarini of Dakshineswar.

Now, let us mention the religio-philosophical ideas of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsadeva as noted down by Swami Abhedananda noted down and depicted in his *Juankathā*.

## CHAPTER XXXXII

### PARAMAHAMSADEVA'S TEACHINGS cum-RELIGIO PHILOSOPHICAL IDEAS AS RECORDED BY SWAMI ABHEDANANDA

#### JAPA AND MEDITATION

Paramahamsadeva would teach us to do *japa* (muttering the *vyamantra*) and *dhyana* (meditation) everyday regularly in the small hours of the morning and in the evening. He would tell us about meditation of the Nyāṅtā (naked) Totāpurī. The Nyāṅtā used to say that if the Tota (water pot) is not polished everyday dirt settles on it, likewise if the mind is not cleansed by meditation every day filth accumulates in it.

By the way Paramahamsadeva would also often tell us about his own *śādhana* as a lesson for us. He used to say,

"During meditation I would become motionless like a stone image. Birds would perch on my head, I would not even feel that." Truly, when the mind becomes motionless and still there is no sensation even if flies and mosquitoes sit on the body. He used to say that those are signs of concentration of the mind.

#### TOTAPURIS VEDANTIC VIEW

Paramahamsadeva used to say, "Nyāṅtā had attained *brahmanana* (knowledge of the ultimate Reality) through discrimination saying "not this, not this" (*neti neti*). The Nyāṅtā would not however accept Sakti (Power) of Brahman as a reality. He would say that Sakti of Brahman was a delusion (*mayā*), and was unreal (*mithyā*), and with this idea he would tifle with Sakti. But during his eleven months' stay here Mother Kali taught him the truth of non-duality, namely that Brahman and *mayasakti* (the power of producing delusion) are identical. Likewise Brahman and Sakti are identical."

#### MAYA IS THE POWER OF BRAHMAN

Acharya Sāṅkara has described the true nature of *mayā* thus. The Sakti of the Supreme God is known as *Avyakta* (inexpressible) or *Avyākṛita* (unmanifested). She is the begin-

ingless supreme *avidya* (power of delusion) consisting of three *gunas* (attributes of *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*) She is *maya* who is to be inferred as the cause of her works by sages and by whom the whole universe is produced. She is neither differentiated nor undifferentiated nor both. She is neither with limbs nor without limbs nor both. Her nature is mysterious and indescribable.<sup>1</sup>

### BRAHMAN AND MAYA

Shree Ramakrishna would explain to us the deep significance of Brahman and *maya* in simple language with illustrations. He used to say 'Brahman is devoid of *guna* (attributes) and also endowed with *guna*. Do you know how absolute Brahman is? He is comparable to a snake which is coiled up and asleep, again the same snake is comparable to Brahman with attributes (*saguna*-Brahman) when it is winding its way. *Nirguna* (attributeless absolute) Brahman is comparable to a calm sea which is one vast expanse. There is no wave nor any movement in Him. He is motionless and firm like Mt. Sumeru. The power of *maya* remains dormant in Brahman. In that state the universe with the earth and all beings remain unmanifested in *mahapralaya* (final dissolution). With the awakening of the power of *maya* waves are generated in the sea of Existence-Knowledge-Bliss. In Vedanta philosophy that state is called *saguna* Brahman. At that time there is an imbalance of the *gunas* in *maya* or *Prakriti* which consists of three *gunas* and then the process of creation starts. This *saguna* Brahman has been designed as Ardha-Narisvara or Hari-Gouri in scriptures. Shree Ramakrishnadeva's knowledge of and faith in this School of Vedanta philosophy were wonderful.

### THEORY OF CREATION

Brahman under the influence of His own power of *maya* appears as *saguna*-Brahman (qualified Godhead with attributes) who is the author or creator, preservation and dissolution. एकोऽहं बहुस्याम' "I am one, I shall be many"—as soon as

<sup>1</sup> Vide the *Vivekachudamani*, pp. 108-109

this resolution arises in *saguna*-Brahman, His power is manifested and the universe with living and non-living things is evolved. The *saguna*-Brahman with His power of *maya* produces this universe out of His own *maya* or *Prakriti* (nature) and enters into that 'तद्वद्वा तदेवानुप्राविशत्।' The phenomenal world is only a mutation of *maya*. *Prakriti* is mutable but Brahman is immutable.

### TWO POWERS OF MAYA

*Maya* has two powers, to cover and to delude (*avarana* and *vikshepa sakti*). The covering power veils *nirguna*-Brahman whose true nature is limitless Existence-Knowledge-Bliss, and the deluding power makes the one non dual entity appear as diverse. This idea has been expressed by a Sadhaka (seeker) in his song

"Thou art the one *Prakriti* who veils Brahman, and as  
the great *maya* thou deludest the three worlds

Thou art the cause of creation, preservation and destruction', etc

Although the three attributes of *maya* are unmanifested in *nirguna* Brahman yet the one limitless entity appears as limited. Therefore, Sri Ramakrishnadeva used to say 'The knowledge that Reality is one is true knowledge, knowledge of diversity is ignorance and so it is an illusion, it is false. He used to call this knowledge of oneness' (knowledge of non-duality) and moreover he used to say, 'Tie up *advaitajnana* at the end of your skirt and do whatever you like. That is to say if after having attained *advaitajnana*, one goes about all worldly activities then that knowledge (which is called *brahmajnana* or knowledge of the Absolute) destroys the ignorance produced by *avidya* and the bondage thereof and he attains emancipation (*mukti*). The sense of 'I' and 'mine' is ignorance. Shree Thakur used to say, "When will emancipation come?—When 'I' will go." "All trouble will be over when 'I' will die." In the *Shashtra* it is written 'भ्रान्ति बद्धो भावजीव भ्रान्तिमुक्तः सदाशिवः' i.e. 'one who is bound in ignorance is a *jiva* (individual being) and one who is free from ignorance is Sadasiva (cosmic being). Just as the delusion of a snake is imposed on a rope so the delusion of the world is imposed on Brahman. When *brahmajnana* is attained,



*maya* which has the power to cause strange delusion, is dispelled just as when a rope is recognized as a rope the illusion of snake is dispelled

Even though Brahman is devoid of attributes and is not limited by space, time and causation, yet under the influence of *maya*, it appears as if it were limited as the *saguna* Isvara who dominates over *maya*, or as individual being or as the world. With *maya* under His control the *saguna* Isvara in His turn is displaying a magic show. 'इन्द्रो मायाभिः पुरुषं ईयते' (*Bṛihadaranyaka Upanishad*, II 5 19) That is to say by dint of the power of *maya* the Paramesvara (*saguna*-Isvara) assumed the form of every thing. In order to manifest His own form He manifested all forms. He appears in many forms through the false sense of individuality caused by name and form. When He is subject to *maya*, He is *jiva*, when He is in control of *maya* He is Isvara (God). When the *jiva* who is in bondage, attains knowledge of his true nature—the effect of ignorance is dispelled and know himself to be identical with limitless Existence-Knowledge-Bliss, he attains fulfilment and spiritual emancipation (*moksha*).

'ब्रह्मविद्ब्रह्मैव भवति' i.e., the knower of Brahman becomes Brahman, and to become Brahman is the same as to know Brahman. See Ramakrishnadeva used to say "Brahman cries in distress being ensnared in five elements". Even though Nvāṅgī 1otāpuri was a man who had attained *brahmajnana*, yet when he was attacked with blood dysentery, he went to drown himself in the Ganges restless with pain. How infinite is the power of *maya*!

### JIVA AND BRAHMAN

In reality, man or an individual being (*jiva*) is not different from Brahman. It is only due to ignorance that he regards himself as one having a body of five elements and thinks that he is separate from his true self and so he suffers by undergoing birth, death, disease, grief, pain and sorrow. But the moment he realises that he is the eternal soul free from sorrow, he is restored to his Self of Bliss.

### THE POWER OF MAYA

Paramahamsadeva would often sing songs of Ramprasad in

sweet voice One day he sang

The delusive power of *Mahamaya* is

so inexorable and She has cast such a charm

That even Brahma and Vishnu have been enchanted,

how can individual beings know the reality?<sup>1</sup>

That is to say even Brahmā, Vishnu and Śiva are deluded by *maya* What to speak of individual beings?

One day someone asked Shree Ramakrishnadeva "Sir, what is *brahmayana*?" Paramahamsadeva said in reply, 'It is not possible to express through speech what *brahmayana* is. It is like the dream of a mute person. All knowledge incultured in Shastras has been defiled by the tongue, *brahmayana* is never defiled.' At that time I was present there. These words reminded me of a couplet (*śloka*) of *Jnanasankalant-Tantra*. The couplet is

उच्छिष्टं सर्वशास्त्राणि सर्वविद्या मुखे मुखे ।

नोच्छिष्टं ब्रह्मज्ञानं अव्यक्तचेतना मयम् ॥

None can express in words what Brahman is. So, the Brahman is never defiled by the tongue. Whatever is uttered is defiled by the tongue. It is said in the *Upanishad* 'यतो वाचो निवर्तन्ते अप्राप्य मनसा सह', that is to say, the Bliss (Existence-Knowledge-Bliss) which words and mind cannot reach and having failed to reach return in discomfiture that is Brahman.

Of course in the Vedas and in the Puranas as much has been said about the Brahman as can possibly be expressed. In *samadhi*, Brahman is directly apprehended that is to say knowledge and knowledge are merged into one. All judgments then cease, speech and mind become motionless. If a doll of salt goes to fathom the depth of a sea, it gets dissolved likewise with realization of the absolute Brahman, all vital process in man stops. He is then unable to determine the real nature of the Absolute with the help of speech and mind. Again a man cannot remain long in the state of *nirvikalpa-samadhi* (Godconsciousness in which the ego is totally effaced). He descends from that high level to the world of senses for

एम्नि महामायार माया रेखेछे कि कुहक करे ।

ब्रह्मा बिण्णु अचैतन्य, जीबे कि ता जान्ते पारे ॥

guiding others. This is called the *brahmanana*. Paramahansa Deva used to say that a Sadhaka can remain in that high state of *samadhi* for twenty one days. Thereafter his body perishes.

The Nyāntā Totāpurī's teaching to Shri Shri Thakur in regard to remaining merged in (the true nature of) Brahman was this: Merge your mind in *buddhi* and merge *buddhi* in the *Atman*, then you will remain merged in your true self. The *Geeta* and the *Upanishad* enjoin that the purpose of the Jñani is to know the *Atman* which is his true Self. In fact, the individual self *jiva* and the supreme Brahman are one, but the true nature of self cannot be known on account of the veil of *maya*. When the veil of *maya* is removed the sun of the Brahman becomes manifest itself.

#### AVIDYA AND VIDYA ARE WITHIN THE AMBIT OF MAYA

*Avidya* keeps man under the charm of the world. Attachment to lust and gold arises from *avidya* and as a result man gets into worldly bondage. From the power of *vidya* come discrimination, renunciation, detachment from lust and gold, faith, devotion, knowledge, love, etc., which lead to God and spiritual emancipation (*mukti*). If the power of *vidya* is worshipped and propitiated, then *avidya* is dispelled. That is why rituals for worship of power are prescribed in the Tantras. Rituals are prescribed for worshipping power in many ways. God can be attained if spiritual practices are performed by adopting the mood of a servant or of a *veera* (one who bravely confronts his senses) or of a son, etc. Paramahansa Deva would say, "I did *sadhana* for two years in the mood of a maid servant and of an intimate friend. I never performed worship in the mood of a *veera*, for my mood is that of a child. I regard a woman's breast as mother's breast. The worship of Sakti (power) is an exacting spiritual practice. It cannot be performed through short-cuts. Self-control is needed for worship of Sakti. The purpose of worshipping Sakti is to be in communion with Sakti and Siva."

"Gouri Pandit said that true knowledge leads to realization of the identity of Kali and Gaurāṅga. The One who is Brahman is also Divine Energy (Kali) and the same One is

Sree Gaurāṅga in a new form'

See Ramakrishna used to say The Divine Incarnation evolves from primordial Energy It is the Energy that incarnates Whatever is done by the Avatara is manifestation of the power of the Divine Mother God is the juggler and all the world with individual beings are these tricks But it is the juggler that is true, his tricks are like dreams So, the tricks are neither true nor permanent One who has realized God, can see the totality of God (the juggler), individual beings, world, *maya* and all All these are His tricks These are both existent and non-existent All these exist so long as the ego exists When discrimination is applied, nothing stands except the Brahman alone Even the ego becomes the trick of the juggler So long as there is the slightest trace of ego it is within the domain of *maya* and the play of *maya* continues The Brahman is beyond the play of *maya*

After the end of the iron age (Kali-yuga), the *Kalki-avatara* will come As a Brahmin's son, innocent of everything will appear on horse back, sword in hand Paramahansa-deva used to sing

When I was in mother's womb I was in the state of Yoga  
On my birth I touched earth  
The midwife cut my umbilical cord  
How can I cut the bonds of *maya*?

#### HATHAYOGI AND RAJAYOGI

Hathayogis practise some physical exercises only Their object is to acquire some *siddhis* (psychic powers) such as eight *siddhis* life long life, etc But God cannot be attained if even one of the *siddhis* or psychic powers is manifested Power can be gained with *siddhis* but the source of power cannot be attained The object of Raja Yoga is to attain devotion, love, knowledge, renunciation So Raja Yoga is better than Hatha Yoga The six *chakras* (plexus) of Raja Yoga correspond to the seven planes of Tantra and Yoga The first three *chakras* are *muladhara*, *svadhisthan* and *manipur* While in these three *chakras* the mind rests at the anus, genitals and umbilicus These are the first three planes of Vedānta When the mind at the fourth plane, viz, the *anahata-padma*, the

seeker has vision of light. When the mind ascends to the fifth plane, viz., *vishuddha-chakra* the seeker likes to talk about God. The sixth plane is *ajna-chakra*. When the mind is however, still beyond reach just as the flame within a lamp cannot be reached because it is separated by a chimney. The seventh plane is attained after the six *chakras* have been passed through. There the mind dissolves and the individual soul and the cosmic soul merge into one in *samadhi*. All sense of separateness then disappears, and knowledge of diversity is dispelled. If discrimination is done by saying, "Not this, not this", then the substance of pure knowledge is realized. Shree Ramakrishna used to teach us all these things.

### THE VEDANTIC VIEW OF SHREE RAMAKRISHNA

Shree Ramakrishna used to say 'Brahman and Sakti are not separate from each other. The world seems to be unreal without power (Sakti). Myself, yourself, house, home, family—all such concepts appear to be unreal then. So, the world stands because the primordial Energy exists. She has become the individual being, the world and the twenty-four *tattvas*, so how can you leave out the individual being and the world? If you do so, then the total content will be reduced to that extent. If from a *bel* fruit you leave out the seeds, the kernel and the husk then you will not get the full weight of the *bel*'.

Truthfulness is the highest form of spiritual practice in Kail Yuga. Devotion ripens into *bhāva* and *bhāva* (ecstasy) ripens into *mahābhāva* (God-intoxication). The next stage is divine love and then realization of God. Shri Gauranga attained this kind of God-intoxication and divine love. When divine love arises the world is forgotten and the seeker becomes unconscious even of the physical body which is so dear. Shri Gauranga had such divine love. That is why he jumped into the sea taking it to be the river Yamuna.

The individual being does not get *mahābhāva* (God-intoxication). The utmost that he may get is *bhāva* (ecstasy). Shri Gauranga used to get into the states of ecstasy, semi-consciousness and consciousness. In the state of ecstasy he would remain merged in Godconsciousness, in the state of semi-con-

sciousness he would dance and in the state of consciousness he would sing *nama sankirtana* (the glory of God's name)

### MAYA

It is lust and gold that constitute *maya*. Do you know what Yoga is? The cosmic soul is like a magnet and the individual soul is like a needle. Yoga is the union caused by attraction of the needle by the magnet. If, however, there is a coating of mud on the needle it is not attracted by the magnet. It is attracted only if the coating of mud is removed. Attachment towards lust and gold is like the coating of mud. If this coating is cleared then Yoga is automatically attained. If tears are shed in earnest longing then the mud of worldliness is washed away by the water of renunciation. If one can shed tears for God then he can realize God and enter into the state of Godconsciousness. If tears are shed in earnest longing for God then the breath is automatically regulated in the form of *kumbhaka*. That is followed by Godconsciousness. Do you know what happens in meditation? The body is like a vessel and mind and intellect are like water contained in it in which the sun of Existence-Knowledge-Bliss is reflected. It is the reflection of the true sun. Through His grace a direct vision of the true sun is obtained by meditation.

One day someone asked Paramahamsadeva, "Is the world unreal?" Paramahamsadeva said, "Why unreal? It is a mode of discrimination. At first when discrimination is done by saying 'not this, not this' the seeker has to ratiocinate that the reality is neither the individual being, nor the world nor the twenty-four *tattvas* (categories) and so to him all these become as unreal as dreams. Thereafter the process of deductive reasoning starts. It then appears that He has manifested Himself as the individual being, the world and all. So long as the ego exists the individual being and the world all exist. When God-vision is attained or Brahman is realized everything seems to be filled with Divine presence. When I went to the sanctuary of the Kali-temple, I found that the image, the altar, the *koshākushi*, the door frame, the marble stone all were filled with the Divine presence. In that

state even the cat seems to be charged with the Divine presence and one realizes that the Mother has assumed all diverse forms

"According to Vedanta the whole world is unreal and is like a dream. But according to the *Puranas* or devotional lore God has become the twenty-four *tattvas* and all and so He is to be worshipped both internally and externally"

One day after dusk Paramahamsadeva was talking to the Mother. He was telling Her, "Mother, I do not want knowledge of the Absolute! Do not make me unconscious by giving me the knowledge of the Absolute. I do not understand Vedanta nor do I like to understand it. Mother, if I get you then Veda, Vedanta, etc., remain far below. A thousand salutes to the knowledge of the Absolute, you may vouchsafe it on others as you please. I am your son, I want my Mother. Mother is all Joy (*Anandamayee*)"

Those who are of the *nityasiddha* rank (who are predisposed to detachment from worldly things) do not get entangled in the world because their earthly desires are extinguished from birth. According to Vedanta one should know oneself but no progress is possible unless the ego is given up.

One day I asked Paramahamsadeva "What the difference was between *jiva* and Brahman. He said, "If you hold a stick across the surface of a flowing river it will look as though the water were divided into two sections but the water beneath remains the same. In the same way the stick of the ego produces the impression as if *jiva* and Brahman were different, but, in reality, there is no difference. When knowledge of Brahman is attained all differences go."

The ego is like a stick. The stick has, as it were, divided water and consequently you and I appear as different entities. We think, "I am so and so, I am learned, etc." So the ego is to be given up. Of course, there is no harm in having the ego which is purified by *vidya* (God-vision). Sankaracharya retained such ego for teaching mankind.

SIGNS OF A SANNYASIN (Mendicant)

Sree Ramakrishna used to say,

"However great a devotee, a Sannyasin may be,

However strong may be his control over the senses,  
He should not sit and talk with a woman"

However cautious one may be in a soot chamber  
 One cannot get out of it without some stain,  
 However careful one may be in the company of a young  
 women

Some sensual desire is bound to arise"<sup>1</sup>

After knowledge of the Brahman is attained discrimination regarding food no longer remains. Even ham is then considered to be sacred. Discrimination of food is necessary for those who are at a lower stage of spiritual development. Those who are spiritually advanced are mindful of the end rather than of the means. Discrimination of food is a means, but the end is realisation of God.

#### TEACHINGS ON YOGA

One day Shree Ramakrishnadeva was teaching Mahmacharan on Yoga, Paramahamsadeva said 'On the whole Yoga is of two kinds, Karma Yoga and Manojoga (Yoga through conception of the mind). Karma Yoga is to be practised in the first three of the four stages of life: *brahmacharya* (life of continence in early youth), *garhasthya* (family life), *vānaprastha* (retirement into seclusion), *sannyasa* (renunciation). The Sannyasin practises Yoga with a *danda* (staff), a *kamandalu* (a wooden waterpot) and a beggar's bowl as his only possessions. Those who are in family life purify their mind by selfless work and thus ultimately they attain knowledge of the Absolute."

"In the stage of true renunciation all rituals like worship, *gapa*, *tarpana* (offerings to departed souls), etc., drop out. The only motives which remain are thinking of God and fixing the mind on Him along with a desire for the welfare of mankind. This happens in the case of the *Avatāras* (Divine Incarnations)"

काजल कि घरमे येत्ता सेयान् होय  
 थोरा दाग लागे पर लागे ।  
 युवतीके साथमे येत्ता सेयान् होय,  
 थोडा काम जागे पर जागे ॥



Mahimacharan quoted from the *Narada-Pancharatna* "If Hari (God) pervades the inner and the outer world, what is the necessity of spiritual practice? If Hari exists neither in the inner nor in the outer world, what is the use of spiritual practice?" Then I chanted, She is the background on which this illusion is superimposed and the world is conjured like a phantom, etc', and I recited from *Nirvāṇāsataka* Aum, I am not the mind nor the intellect nor the ego nor am I the chitta (the instrument of feeling, pleasure and pain), etc' I then found that Mahimacharan was uttering I am Siva' I am Siva' and every time he said to Paramahamsadeva was saying, not I not I, it is thou, it is thou, the Existence-Knowledge-Bliss" That was an enjoyable scene Its memory is still fresh in my heart

#### THE NOUMENON AND PHENOMENA

Paramahamsadeva used to say "The noumenon and phenomena are of the same stuff just as the terrace and the stairs leading to it are of the same material The noumenon is Brahman who is the limitless Existence-Knowledge-Bliss He is both with attributes and without attributes It is He who is the noumenon as well as phenomena Phenomena consist of His sport as the Supreme Being, God, man, universe, etc In His sport as man He appears as Divine Incarnation It is God who appears as man by way of divine sport and it is He who incarnates as *Avātara* The Existence-Knowledge-Bliss has become individual beings of diverse forms and it is He who is at play in the form of man—this faith leads to integral knowledge Do you know what the divine sport as man is like? It is like a pipe through which rain water drains out from the terrace with force The power of the Existence-Knowledge-Bliss comes through a channel or a pipe"

Paramahamsadeva used to say "Continence is necessary for realization of God Sukdev and others had full self-control If full self-control or continence is maintained for twelve years then a nerve known as *mehānadi* grows in the system One can then remember everything He then acquires the power to attain all knowledge"

"If householders do not offer money to the monks, how

can the latter subsist? All people come here to Paramahansadeva as nothing is to be offered to him”

Once a Tantrika asked ‘Why is it that Tantrik rituals produce no results now-a-days? Ramakrishna said in reply ‘The rituals are not performed whole-heartedly and with devotion That is why no result is produced”

### GOD IS FORMLESS AND WITH FORM

Paramahamsadeva used to say “He who is formless assumes form One should also know the forms of manifestation of God The spiritual seeker gets vision of the form on which he concentrates his mind or meditates The form thereafter merges into limitless Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Then the form dissolves into formlessness

Paramahamsadeva used to tell those who were his companions for divine sport and his intimate devotees that he was a full Incarnation of the Divinity (*Purna Avatara*) He would say “God incarnates himself in order to inculcate true knowledge and love to mankind What do you think of me? He himself replied “My father had gone to Gaya There Lord Gadadhara appeared to him in dream and said, “I shall be born as your son’ In his dream my father said, “Lord I am a poor Brahmin, how can I serve you? Lord Gadadhara said “There will be no difficulty” You understand?” We looked at him with wonder when we heard him There was a smile on his face

### HARMONY OF ALL RELIGIONS

Paramahamsadeva used to say “People of different denominations have extolled their respective faiths The Vaishnavas try to belittle the Shaktas and the Shaktas decry the Vaishnavas The Vaishnavas say that it is impossible to cross the ocean of the world without being initiated with *Krishna-mantra* (name of the Lord Krishna which has saving powers) The Lord Krishna is the ferryman of the world-river To this the Shaktas say “That is true of course—but our Mother is the Sovereign above the king of kings. She has appointed Shri Krishna to operate the world ferry” But

I find that it is all the same The Existence-Knowledge-Bliss is the goal of all faiths He who is formless is also with form and it is to Him that all the diversity of appearances appertain

He who is without attributes is my father,

He who is with attributes is my mother,

Whom to praise and whom to decry

Both sides of the scale are evenly balanced

He who is capable of harmonizing between different religious faiths, is a true seeker All the rest are monotonous He who is called *Aum* Brahman, the Existence-Knowledge-Bliss in Tantras and *Aum* Krishna, the Existence-Knowledge-Bliss in Puranas The Vaishnavas admit that Krishna assumed the appearance of Kali In fact all these are different manifestations of the same Existence-Knowledge-Bliss There are as many paths of realization as there are faiths Many paths lead to God but the goal is one and the same

### THREE KINDS OF DEVOTION

Paramahamsadeva used to say "Devotion is of three kinds—*sattvik*, *rajasik* and *tamasik* The *sattvika* type of devotee performs spiritual practices in secret He will perhaps do *japa* and meditation sitting inside the mosquito curtain so that others may not know When devotion becomes purely *sattvik* God-vision is near at hand In the *rajasika* type of devotion there is a tendency to be showy, for instance worship is performed with sixteen items of offerings and external pomp Therefore, Rampiasad said 'If worship is done with attractive display then vanity arises in the mind' There is chance of vanity arising in mind if worship is done with pomp In the *tamasik* type of devotion there is aggressiveness—for example the cry of "Hail Mother", "Hara Hara Bom Bom", etc., by Saktas and the Saivas In the devotion of the Vaishnavas there is a spirit of meekness They do *japa* in rosary and say with tears, "Oh Krishna have mercy on me I am the lowest of the low and a sinner, save me" They do not have such burning faith as to think 'I have taken God's name once, so all my sins have been destroyed' The Jnanins say "Where is the stain of sin in me?" So saying, Parama-

hamsadeva began to sing in a sweet voice, made with divine love. Tears of divine love flowed from the eyes of Sasadhari Pandit and everybody sat there speechless and spell-bound. The wonderful scene of that day is still impressed in my heart.<sup>1</sup>

Now, from these ideas of Shree Ramakrishna, as recorded by Swami Abhedananda, we can think of the true characteristics of religion and philosophy of Shree Ramakrishnadeva.

## JEWISH AND HINDU FESTIVALS

Swami Abhedananda had in him a wide and comparative knowledge. He used to say, 'something of everything and everything of something'. While discussing comparatively about Jewish and Hindu festivals, he said "Two great nations of antiquity have moved the religious world by establishing the fundamental laws of ethics as well as by producing from among them the greatest law-givers and saviours of mankind. The one was Semitic and the other was Aryan. The one lived in the Western part of Asia, while the other occupied India. The most wonderful are the similarities in ethical ideas, manners, and practices that existed between these two nations. Oriental scholars are startled at the most singular coincidences between the laws of Moses and the laws of Manu. When I read the laws of Moses in the Old Testament, I could hardly imagine that I was reading the laws of Moses and not of Manu. The same sanitary laws, the same injunctions for cleanliness of men and women, of animals or food, for the marriage of priests and priestesses, the same rules for the division of society into classes, the same sacrifices, rituals and festivals show that there must have existed a close relation between Moses and Manu.

Some scholars go so far as to show that Moses, Menes, the law-givers of Egypt, Minos of Greece and Manu of India were the titles which had same significance and were given to the law-givers of different countries. "Those who wish to know more about Manu" says the Swami, "ought to study the Hindu laws which will throw considerable light upon understanding the true meanings of the Mosaic laws. Like the ancient Egyptians and Chaldeans, both the ancient Jews and the ancient Hindus, were devoted to the studies of Astronomy and the relations of the heavenly bodies to the earth. Consequently many of the astronomical events were celebrated for certain purpose. The purpose was known at first to the wise only. The priests did not explain it before the masses, kept secret and interpreted in such a way that it would interest

the people in general and make them observe the practice. The festival of Passover or Pascal Lamb is a very old one. It existed in India from prehistoric times. Long before this festival was identified with the worship of Yahveh, it was practised by the Hindus to commemorate the Passover of the equinoxial sun from the Bull to the Ram or Lamb from Taurus into Aries. It was called *yagna* in Sanskrit. It was known to the Egyptians before the time of Moses. Both the Egyptians and the Hindus fixed the commencement of the year at the Vernal Equinox. The Egyptian festival commenced on the very day when the Pascal Lamb was separated. The Hebrew name was Peshach which means transit. The Lamb itself is often called Peshech or Passover. The Hindus celebrate this festival even today and call it Holi. This festival lasts for a week. As in this festival the Israelites marked their door posts with blood and the Egyptians with red, so the Hindu throw red powder everywhere."

Now, the passage of the Israelites from Egypt affords a very remarkable example of the double meaning of the Hebrew books. The connection between the feast of unleavened bread and the Pascal sacrifice was of later introduction. Swami Abhedananda said: "It is remarkable that the Hindu bread is always unleavened for any religious sacrifice or ceremony. The feast of harvest and the feast of gathering which are also called feast of the week and feast of tabernacles have been practised in India from ancient times. These institutions became essential parts of the service of Javeh when he was acknowledged as lord of nature and as the source of fruitfulness. Purim feast of the book of Esther however was of Persian origin. It was the Persian feast of Furdigan dedicated to the memory of the Dead. Among the Hindus there is a similar feast which is called *tarpan* performed in memory of the Dead. It lasts for a fortnight."

"Saturday was a sacred day of the Saturn worshippers among the ancient Semites before it became the Sabbath of the Jews. In India, Saturday being Saturn's day, the people propitiate then Deity by devotional exercises to counteract the astrologically evil influences of the planet Saturn. There are many other festivals among the Hindus which time will not permit me to describe."

The main object of all these festivals however both among the Hindus and the Jews was to remember the Lord of the universe, to bring him in close touch with our everyday life either through mythological or historical descriptions and to glorify the sin-atonning name of Hmy who is Javeh of the Jews, Father in Heaven of the Christians, Ahura Mazda of the Parsees, Allah of the Mohammedans, and Brahman, and Divine Mother of the Hindus ”

## CHAPTER XXIX

### QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q When should we consider a material universe an illusion?

Ans You cannot call it an illusion until you reach the Absolute. It would be a mistake. It is real so long you live in nescience. But anyone who has reached the Absolute, to him it would appear like a dream. So long as we are conscious of the phenomenal things, they appear as real to us. They are not illusions.

There is a great difference between the terms, illusion and delusion. An illusion has not even an apparent existence, and is non-existent for all the time like the sky-flower (*kha pushpa*). But delusion has an apparent existence (*pratitikasatta*), and has no permanent existence (*paramarthika-satta*). And, therefore, delusion is a correct term for *maya* or *avidya* instead of the term, illusion.

Q Most ministers and preachers of the Gospel tell us to put our mind on the spirit. But to gain the knowledge of the universe, why should we not put our mind on the material universe?

Ans Certainly, you should put your mind on the material universe, and harmonize God and the universe.

Now to make it explicit, it can be said that there are different stages in the process of the Divine realization. In the first stage, we consider the material world as well as our gross physical body as real, but if we are seekers after the Absolute, we do not find any limitation. Generally we are mixing up the Absolute with the material world or matter, but the Absolute is neither the mind, nor the matter. When we rise on the plane of the Absolute, or as I give the illustration of the magnet, when we come to the neutral point of the magnet, there is neither positive nor negative pole, but when we come to the one pole, the other pole, of course, exists. When we are on the positive pole, we cannot deny the negative pole. How can we deny the consciousness of the body, unless we go to the neutral point which is beyond thought, time and space? So



we must not mix the ideal of the Absolute with any of our mental conditions, which are within the limitation of time and space. That would be the distinction, and so there is no confusion about it. We must describe the different viewpoints to understand the relation of the Absolute to the universe, and also to ourselves.

Q If the Absolute existed in the beginning of all and if the ultimate goal of all is to involve in the Absolute, then why can we not understand the necessity of evolution, as it is necessary for the Absolute to constantly manifest itself by means of the material phenomena?

Ans Yes, the Absolute constantly exists and manifests in some form or other. It is a part of its nature. There is no question of necessity of forcing its nature. If this manifestation stops here (as in the case of *khanda-pralaya* or partial dissolution of any planetary system), there would be the manifestation in some other planet.

Q Then we would never attain the Absolute.

Ans No, you will certainly attain the Absolute when you go to the neutral point and where is no subject and object. You may attain the Absolute, but the rest of the world will go on just the same without you.

Q Do we understand you to say that the law of the action and the reaction is a fixed law?

Ans It is fixed in this way that it is the law that governs all the phenomena. If you strike a blow on the table, you will receive a blow in return. It is fixed in that sense. But it is not fixed beyond the limitations of time and space, because beyond time and space this law cannot work.

Q Then a person who once made some mistakes, had to suffer all the rest of his life. Is it natural?

Ans Yes, every action will produce its reaction. Nothing is done without producing a result and that is a good thing to happen.

Q Then everyone would have to suffer all his life! Can this Absolute not cure it, or wipe it out?

Ans It will be cured in the end. The Absolute does never suffer, but the person himself would have to suffer all his life, or as Christ taught that your own spirit will wipe it out, when the Divine realization comes. Be rest assured that

everything will be wiped out after the attainment of the God-intuition

Q Do you believe in the truth of Astrology?

Ans Partly, as far as there is truth in it, and as far as it is concerned with the province of science

Q How much truth is there in it?

Ans The fortune-telling rarely gives us truth. The scientific side of it I accept. But the modern Astrology goes too far in the fortune-telling business. Our country (India) has been the home of Astrology from ancient times, and we accept Astrology, but not in all its phases. There is some truth in it, which cannot be denied, but the people stretch it too far. Sometimes they become a puppet in the hand of the Providence or *adrista*. But remember that there is *purushakara kama* or the self-effort, which can help you much in the progress of life.

Q When should we feel at liberty to go into the ultimate state which is known as the Absolute? It would seem that when we do that, we have risen above the mental plane, and hence would disconnect ourselves by that from our work in this world.

Ans When there is so much work to be done in the world before the humanity is lifted out of this ignorance, of which you speak, and as it is said by Christ, that work would continue, until this world would become the kingdom of Heaven, and finally all would be laid at the feet of God.

Q Now, until that work is accomplished, are we at liberty to leave our jobs here and go into the Absolute?

Ans When you are ready for marching towards the Absolute, the world will not need you. The world will give you permission to get out. The world will make you free to proceed towards your divine goal.

Q Do we ever reach that point so long we are in the field of work and duties?

Ans No, we impose upon ourselves all these works and duties through our ignorance.

Q Who are we to take the responsibility? We cannot move our finger without the will of the Lord, so the Lord knows how to manage His business.

Ans No, it is our business to seek the kingdom of

Heaven Because, if you seek the kingdom of Heaven first, everything else will be added unto you Therefore we must search for the Absolute with an intense longing within us, and must try to realize that, before we can do anything else If we do everything else outside of that, we are always making mistakes, and, therefore, the teachings of Christ were greater than the interpretation of them Vedanta tells us that first realize the Absolute, and then you will do your duty with knowledge and without mistakes At present we are groping in the darkness of ignorance, and every way we turn we stumble That will stop The kingdom of Heaven will be established on this earth if everybody can do the right thing

Q We would like to know what are these creatures good for in this great universe?

Ans They are good for everything that you can think of Every individual has his place, and your place cannot be taken either by me, or by anybody You fill your place, and you are the only one who can fill it A little animalcule which is living under your feet, has its place No one can take its place That is just as important as anything that you can think of as the most important thing Each one has its place and purpose, only we do not realize that purpose, because we see only the surface, and do not go into the depth \* \* You have infinite potentialities and possibilities, and the only way you can become conscious of those potentialities is by manifesting them on the physical plane So, nothing is wrong, and nothing can be taken away from us Rather we are filling our place, and realizing what we possess as our birth right

Q Does one necessarily have to leave the world, when one enters realization of the Absolute? Can he remain here as a great spiritual teacher?

Ans He does not have to go away from the world, because where would he go? If there is no place outside the world, where can he go? Everywhere he sees the same thing The world is not outside of you, and it is only in your mind If you conquer the world in your mind, you may live in the world without being of the world Live in the world, but not of the world A boat can stay on the water, but if the water gets into the boat, the boat is doomed You can live in the world, but if the worldliness gets into you, you are doomed

That is what it is. Get rid of the worldliness from your heart, and the Absolute will be realized then, and not under any other condition.

Real knowledge is to go back to your simple nature, to go to the centre. You can never eradicate any evil by the reformed works. That is a mistake. Train and educate also the children. The parents must be responsible for bringing them up and educating them. Give them the ideal in the beginning, how and what should be their ideal. Do not try to reform them from outside.

Q. Cannot all these reformed societies do any real good?

Ans. Yes, it depends upon our educational system. Take the boys and the girls in the schools and the colleges in their home life. They must learn the truth how this world exists. Parents ought not to have children unless they know how to rear them. So, it is a great responsibility. Outside reformers, who are reforming on the surface, do not go to the root of things. If the cause of evil is removed, the effect will be removed naturally. That is the real reform work which we need today.

Q. You stated that no action was wholly good and none wholly evil. This being the case, how is it possible to obtain perfect freedom in the present life?

Ans. Every action produces some kind of reaction, and the reaction must be similar in nature to the action itself. This is the law. Every effect must have a cause and every cause must produce an effect. We cannot escape this inevitable law. It is very difficult to think of even escaping this law. The law of action and reaction binds us to earthly existence. We have come to this earth, being subject to the same law, and we will continue to remain so even after the death of the body. All our physical actions, mental activities like thoughts and desire, and moral actions and spiritual acts will produce their results. Another thing we must consider, that the results will come back to the source from whence the actions started. They will come back to the doer, the actor, and consequently, we will have to reap the results ourselves. If we have done anything wrong, we will have to reap the wrong consequence. That is, the result will be of similar

nature. It will produce misery, sorrow, suffering, disease, and death, and good acts are those which are in harmony with other laws of nature, i.e., laws which are physical, mental, moral, and spiritual.

The word *karma* means action or work. It includes physical and mental, intellectual and spiritual works. But at the same time we must remember that this is a world of relativity, this is a world of duality. It is not a world of absolute good, or it is not the world beyond relativity. We are within limitations. If we try to understand what relativity means, we must remember that everything is related to every other thing, and the opposites exist. That, if there be light, there would be darkness. If there be no darkness, there would be no light. If there be birth, there must be death. If there be good health, there must be ill health, otherwise there could not be good health. If there be good, there must be evil, if there be virtue, there must be vice, and so on. All these are related, and we cannot avoid them on this plane of existence. These are our limitations.

All knowledge depends upon comparison. When we compare one sensation with another, then we know whether it is good or bad, pleasant or unpleasant, agreeable or disagreeable, and whenever we try to do any act or any work, being limited in our knowledge, in our understanding, in our method, and in our powers, we cannot do it perfectly. We do certain acts, but we make some mistakes, and those mistakes are bound to occur in relation to persons who are limited in knowledge as we are. These limitations will be the cause of making mistakes.

Q. What is perfect freedom?

Ans. Perfect freedom is the goal of each individual soul. Freedom from birth and death, disease and sorrow, suffering and misery, and from all relativity, is the goal. The attainment of perfect freedom comes when we realize the nature of our true Self. The true Self is within us and is beyond all laws. It is not governed by laws, but when it is manifesting itself under the limitations and through the relative conditions, it appears as bound. True knowledge makes us understand the laws of nature and the method by which we can transcend those laws. That would be the condition of true

knowledge, and true knowledge reveals the nature of our true Self

Q The four methods of Yoga seem to be presented so as to give the idea that each is complete within itself, exclusive of the others. Is this separation one of classification, primarily arising from the limitations of the various types and temperaments and human nature, whose needs Vedanta seeks to supply? Or is the distinction one of essentials, the practices and conditions necessary to one method of development being irreconcilable with or unfavourable to the practices and conditions of the other methods?

Ans The four different methods of Yoga that are described, are related to the four different types of temperaments or tendencies. Some are naturally inclined to work, and they have no faith. They are not educational in their nature, they simply live to work, and they do not believe in the existence of God even. They may be atheistic or agnostic. They want to work. The Karma Yoga is specially for those. In the first place, those who cannot believe in God and have no faith in a Supreme Being, who do not understand the spiritual science, and do not care for any prayer or devotion, do not understand what are they going to do? Karma Yoga supplies them with the method by which they can attain to the same goal which is reached through other methods, i.e., through devotion, prayer and so on. Concentration and meditation are all works. They are included in mental work. Of course, when we take the word *karma* in its most universal sense, it includes all the activities of mind and body and intellect. They are all *karma*, whether mental or physical. Mental work is just as much *karma*. The effort to concentrate our minds upon some object is as much *karma* as it could be, because *karma* does not merely mean physical activity or manual labour, but it means also mental and intellectual. Even devotion is a *karma* or an action. Emotion is an activity of our mind. So any kind of activity is a *karma*, but Karma Yoga is a specialized method by which the highest goal of freedom and perfection could be reached through work and work alone.

Q What do we mean by purification of heart?

Ans Purification of heart means reduction of the mental activities to their simplest form. When the heart is purified,

the absolute Truth will be revealed unto the pure heart. These four different methods cannot be separated from one another. Although we say that there are four different methods, still one includes the other in some form or other, just as I have already described that devotion and concentration are all *karmas* or acts. A devotee cannot get out of Karma Yoga, when he kneels down, he sends supplications to the Supreme Being, and he worships the Lord. He is practicing that Karma Yoga, but his natural tendency is to love. He has emotion. He has more feeling, and his heart is more developed. Then there is another who wants to see God through intellect. For that person, there is Jnana Yoga, which is the path of discrimination, understanding or philosophical method. Discrimination is a *karma*, still it is separated from Karma Yoga simply because of the particular type of character which will adopt that method.

Different methods or paths are inter-related with one another and we cannot separate them absolutely, or make them as separate paths that have no relation to each other. If we have a certain tendency which is more predominant than the tendencies of other people, then we can choose the path which is suited to us, and these Yogas have all various subdivisions again, which include all the varieties of characters among individuals.

If one believes in one thing, that is all right. Let that person start from that point, and the method which is particularly suited to that character or to his tendency, will be the means to the attainment of the highest goal. Vedanta by formulating these different methods, has succeeded in giving a universal basis to religion, and has given a death-blow to all sectarianism and dogmatism. Vedanta says, if you do not believe in this, try something different, you will reach the same goal, and you will reach perfection. If you do not believe in Christ, that is all right. If you do not believe in a personal God, that is all right. If you are an atheist or an agnostic, that is all right. Vedanta has adopted that universal principle that each individual soul must attain to the highest perfection through the process of evolution, and that evolution must go through different channels according to the tendencies and characteristics of the individual. One may go in one direc-

tion and the other in another direction, but they will all come to the same common centre which is the goal of all individuals. The goal is one, and cannot be many.

Q What is the common unity?

Ans Unity is the highest goal. The highest goal is perfection, and in perfection we include the attainment of freedom, Godconsciousness, and transcendence of all laws of nature. There you will find the unity, but these are different paths which lead to the same goal, the same unity. In our practical life, we must practice all these various methods according to our position and daily occurrences of our lives. When we are in business, we practise Karma Yoga. We must learn the secret of work. We must not work for results alone, but should also consider that these works of our daily life will purify the heart and will be the means towards the attainment of the highest goal. There is no such work as trivial or unimportant work. Even the most trivial work, like scrubbing the floor, is very important and that will purify our heart if we learn the secret of work. There is no such thing as drudgery. All work is sacred and can be made into an act of worship, and that is what Karma Yoga tells us, and it is very helpful.

Q What is an act of worship?

Ans An act of worship does not mean sitting in a corner. Eating, drinking, and walking are acts of worship, if we know how to do them, and Vedanta tells us this wonderful process or wonderful method by which all these works of our daily life will be directed towards that one common goal of perfection, the attainment of Godconsciousness. Then when you come home, you practise a little concentration. That concentration is for material results. Then you practise concentration for spiritual results. Now, direct that concentrated energy towards the supreme Spirit and towards your true Self, and you will get spiritual uplifting which you cannot get simply by concentrating your mind upon material objects. The power of concentration brings the result according to the nature of the object towards which power is directed. If the power of concentration be directed towards material objects, it will bring material results. When it is directed towards psychic objects, it will produce psychic results. When it is



directed towards moral objects, it will produce moral results, and when it is directed towards the supreme Spirit, spiritual illumination will come. So we will have to do all these things as long as we are living upon the material plane. We must not neglect our soul-life, and must not neglect the works which would bring the *purification of the heart and would ultimately lead to the attainment of absolute freedom and Godconsciousness*.

**Q** Is there a work which explains *yama* and where can it be obtained?

**Ans** Yes, there is a work, *Raja Yoga*, by Swami Vivekananda. You can obtain it here, in New York, from the Vedanta Society.

**Q** What is the meaning of doing works unattached?

**Ans** That is, you work, but do not be attached to the results of the work. You perform duty, the duty of work which you have undertaken with your utmost ability, but if the results do not come, do not worry about it.

You should understand the law of action and reaction. That is, every action will produce a similar reaction, and reaction is the result. The result is to come in some form or other, nothing will be lost. You must know that, and by knowing that, when you have performed your duty, which you have undertaken, whether you worry for the result or not, the result is bound to come to you. You will get the results, and you cannot get what you do not deserve. You must rest assured, and, therefore, that is called unattachment. That is unattachment to the results of works, by knowing the law of action and reaction, or cause and sequence, or cause and effect.

**Q** What is importance of the body?

**Ans** This body is just the shell. It is not our true being. We are separate from the body, and, therefore, we must not think of ourselves as one with the body, forgetting our soul-life which is immortal, because we do not truly know ourselves. We are in a state of ignorance and, therefore, we cannot separate ourselves from these material forms. When we become unattached to the body we become unattached to those things which are related to the body. These physical things, furniture, and house and property, do not belong to

us, but we consider them as belonging to us, and this consideration is the result of the grand mistake which we have committed at the outset by thinking of ourselves as one with the material body which we are not, and one mistake leads to another. Just as one law leads to thousands of laws, so one mistake leads to thousands of mistakes.

We have made the great blunder by thinking of ourselves as one with the gross material body. Out of ignorance we identify ourselves with all the ailments of the body, and we try to cure ourselves, and the moment we understand that the soul is immortal and is unaffected by the changes of the body we become unattached to the body, and then all other things will take a different shape. We will then live in this world in perfect peace and happiness, without worrying about anything, without being subject to disease and suffering, sorrow and misery. All these proceed from ignorance, because we do not know ourselves. It must be remembered that the soul never worries, but we who are entangled in the nets of ignorance, worry.

Q Is it possible to prolong life in the body indefinitely under the proper environments, and what would they be?

Ans This body is dying every minute. By death we mean change. The baby body is dead and gone, the child body is dead and gone. The body of youth is dying, the body of old age will die also. So death means a change. Every seventh year, all the molecules of our body are renewed. By food and drink, we are drawing in new materials. By breathing air we are taking in new particles of matter into our system, and we are throwing off the old particles which we have used up, and this constant change is meant by death. Our life would be impossible without this kind of change. Our body is nothing but an eddy in the ocean of matter. Imagine if you can see that this whole universe is an ethereal ocean with the finest particles of matter constantly in vibration and in that ocean, innumerable little eddies, each of these eddies being what we call the human body. If you look through X-rays, you will find that your body is just like a mist, only a little skeleton is there, and the flesh part is all gone. That will give you an idea of the ephemeral nature of the body.

## CHAPTER XXXIV

### THE HINDU PREACHER

Many are of opinion that the Hindu religion neither was nor can ever be a propagandistic religion and that every attempt to spread it is antagonistic to its fundamental principles. To these men of such peculiar views we say that religion without preaching is like life without animation. Without the institution of preaching no religion can withstand the immoral influences of degeneration or retard the progress of corruption. From immemorial antiquity down to this nineteenth century of the Christian era the vital powers of the Hindu faith have been preserved by the Avataaras or Incarnation of God and by holy sages, whose mission of life was to promulgate from time to time the highest doctrines of purity, spiritual development, and the attainment of divine perfection and also to popularise the solutions of intricate religious and philosophical problems found in our sacred scriptures. Strictly speaking, these inspired sages and their chosen disciples were the real preachers of *Sanatana Dharma*, the Eternal Faith. To this kind of propagation and popularisation of its immortal doctrines, the Hindu religion owes its existence, and it will live through eternity if only its true spirit gets widely diffused. In short, it will, as the best embodiment of truth, become the predominant religion of the world, if Hindu preachers offer the light of their religion to the seeker after Truth among the nations of the world.

The method of preaching adopted by the Hindus of olden days, was altogether different from what is now adopted by the followers of other faiths. The ancient Hindu preachers always tried to satisfy the religious cravings of the people by teaching them such truths, as could be comprehended by them in those times. As time rolled on, the capacity of man for religious and moral culture became improved, and new

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(This article was published in the *Brahmavadin* (Madras), on 23rd November 1895 before his journey to the West. It was the first writing of the Swami.)

changes and reformatations were introduced into the method of preaching religion so as to supply the new requirements of the people at large

In very ancient times, religion was preached and propagated in India by *Rishis* and holy sages, who by the example of their pure and highly moral lives, taught the people how to make spiritual progress and attain divine perfection. After the days of the *Rishis* the caste of the Brahmins became as a whole responsible for the preservation and propagation of the organised *Aryan* faith. The advent of the *jnana-marga*—the path of knowledge—as an improvement upon the old *Karma Yoga*—the path of rituals—brought the ascetic *Sannyasins* forward as an order devoted entirely to the work of propagation of the divine truth of religion. The ancient *Sannyasins* of India are the oldest preachers of religion known to human history and even today we have their successors in our midst. When all other religions in the world were narrow and exclusive, India had more than one body of ascetic preachers of the sublime Truth and universal religion of Vedanta. Both Buddhist and Jain literature of pre-Christian origin bear witness to the fact.

During the Buddhistic period, Buddhist monks preached charity, morality, purity, and peace throughout the length and breadth of India and Central and Western Asia, and the result was that thousands upon thousands accepted the teaching of Buddha and became converts to this new branch of the old Hindu faith. But after something like a thousand years' way in India Buddhism was driven out of the land of its birth by mainly of the work of the Hindu savants like Kumāṇila Bhatta and his followers.

Kumāṇila proclaimed the truth of the sublime doctrines of the Vedas from the Himalayas to Cane Comorn and after fighting hard with the Buddhists he at last succeeded in reviving the authority of Brahminism and in reconverting the Buddhists into the old Hindu faith. Then after Buddhism was driven out of India by the efforts of Kumāṇila Bhatta and others there arose in the south the mighty genius Sankara, who gave a new stimulus to the spiritual revival of the Hindus. He explained the spirit of the Vedas in the new light of the Vedanta, gave a firm foundation of the Hindu Faith

and propounded the doctrine of Advaitism as that which is taught by the *Upanishads*. The fallacies of the Buddhist philosophy were clearly exposed by Sankara in his Vedantic writings and conquered the then leaders of the various sects that had arisen with the downfall of Buddhism by means of powerful polemical weapons and extraordinary spiritual powers.

Sankara seems naturally to have thought that it was necessary to have preachers of Hinduism and that these preachers should be monks or *Sannyasins* who by leading pure, moral and spiritual lives, would be in a position to teach the masses the true spirit of Vedanta, themselves constantly moving from place to place for the purpose. The disciples of Sankara followed their Master, preached the Vedanta and established *Maths* or monasteries in different parts of the land. These monasteries became in time the headquarters of the *Sannyasin* preachers. Even from before the time of Sankara the *Sannyasins* have been the real pillars of the Hindu faith in all its sectarian aspects.

After Sankaracharya, Ramanuja, Madhva, Chaitanya and Nanaka (all inspired preachers and founders of different religious sects in India) arose in various parts of the land, and preached the different aspects of the all-sided Hindu religion. They propagated the *bhakti marga* or the path of love and devotion, and profoundly impressed upon the minds of men the higher doctrine of Divine love, faith and devotion. All of them sympathising even with the lowest classes of the Hindu community roused their religious feelings which lay dormant for centuries and converted them to become *Bhaktas* of the one Supreme God of the Vedanta in one way or other. Chaitanya and Nanaka went a little further than others. They allowed even Yavanas and Mohammedans to enter into their religious community and become their disciples.

Thus we see that before the birth of Buddhism, Christianity and Mohammedanism, Hinduism was a propagandist religion, the diffusive influence of its universal principles working amongst the Hindus of the different parts of India. After Buddhism arose, Hinduism stretched forth its might into the Hindu fold. When Mahomedans came to

arms among the Buddhists and collected them once again, no doubt some of the Hindus embraced the faith of Islam. And when time came, the Hindu Vedanta influenced even Mohammedanism and its old converts accepted again the teachings of Hindu preachers. Islam softened and beautified by the Vedanta is the religion of the Sufis.

After such conversions and reconversions Hinduism has been silently working among its followers and gathering for them strength and light. A new religious wave has now come from foreign lands, which is, in all probability, simply a reflected wave recoiling upon the original shore whose 'prophet winds gave rise to it at the first instance. This new wave is called Christianity and its historic relation to the Vedantism of India is sure to be made out sooner or later. Faint voices are already heard pointing to the Indian origin of Christianity and the true Hindu can have nothing but sympathy for all sorts and conditions of the converts. All religion is in the conversion of the obdurate heart of man and in inclining him to virtue and to devotion to God. But do all converters know this?

Mercenary preachers of any religion can nowhere do any real good. For their mission in life is anyhow to increase the number of converts, with such preachers the religion becomes a commercial article. They are ever in search of new markets for its sale and often much of what is not good for home consumption is sold abroad and very naturally the figures in the account books swell. Is this religious progress? We are living in a curiously mercantile age which has, in a remarkably wonderful way, made not only religion and philosophy but also philanthropy itself a paying profession. Indulging in habits of luxury and endeavouring to satisfy their worldly desires for pleasure and for fame these mercenary diffusers of religion do not care so much for the spiritual development of man as for making numerous converts from other religions. They will not allow religions and religious men to live at peace with one another. If they did so their own occupation would be gone.

Hinduism has in recent years suffered much owing to the want of proper preachers. Though the *Sannyasins* were formerly the real preachers of religion in India, most of them

now have become illiterate and luxury-loving in their habits, and do not feel the practice of renunciation and the teaching and preaching of religion to be their daily duty. Hence it is now necessary that well-educated *Sannyasins*, animated by the sincerest piety and the most austere spirit of humility and self-denial, should rise from the Hindu community to make themselves all in all to the people to set before them examples of perfect righteousness and to devote their lives with zeal to popular instruction and the office of preaching religion. Men of real sanctity and high-minded freedom and gifted with high intellectual powers should now enter upon this path of religious zeal and remove the abuses and the moral corruption that are daily working mischief in our society and in our homes. Spiritual strength comes to all as usual by the door of renunciation, and resignation can alone be the undisturbed home of the serene life of religious bliss. Heroic Hindus! take up the begging bowl and go from door to door spreading the love of righteousness and peace among mankind.

Moreover, it is now high time for us to send Hindu missionaries like Swami Vivekananda to distant lands for diffusing widely the highest doctrine of the Hindu religion and for bringing men of all creeds under its benign influence.

In Europe and America, there must be earnest and sincere souls waiting to hear the sublime teachings of the Vedanta and accept the doctrines of *karma*, of reincarnation and of immortality of the soul.

A great want of this age is a religious order of the Hindus, which is well-equipped with modern learning in science and in philosophy, possessing a knowledge of the world and acquainted with the spirit of the times will undertake the propagation of the Hindu religion in all countries, and bring into existence the reign of peace and harmony in the midst of warring sects and religions. The fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of men are both surely independent of the religious garb we men wear from time to time.<sup>1</sup>

A Swami,  
(Swami Abhedananda)

<sup>1</sup> Regarding this article, the Swami has noted 'My first article I ever wrote long before I had any idea of coming to the West—Swami A.'





# APPENDIX

## List of Some Manuscripts and Their Dates as Found PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

	Pages
1 Panchadasī (1896)	25
2 What is Vedānta (1902)	6
3 Vedic Literature (1908)	21
4 Ushas three notes	3
5 Vedic Conception of God (1908)	18
6 Philosophy of the Vedas (1908)	10
7 Religion of Vedānta	10 & 4
8 Song of Creation pieces 18)	8
9 Various Phases of Vedānta (1900) 2 pieces	1
10 Vedāntic Conception of God (2 pieces)	1
11 Phil of Buddhism & Vedānta (1901) 4 pieces	2
12 Duties of a Student of Vedānta (1902) 2 pieces	1
13 Vedānta Philosophy	6
14 Questions & Answers, End of Vol I	1
15 Aryan Civilization (1897)	14
And a note	1
16 Ethics of Vedānta (a)	12
17 Ethics of Vedānta (b) (1904)	9
18 Universal Religion of Vedānta (1897)	23
19 Universal Religion of Vedānta (1904)	7
20 Our Universality of Vedānta	11
21 Theory & Practice (1904 & 1905)	12
22 Who creates our Destiny (Including Fatalism & Vedānta (1899)	3
23 Monism & Monotheism (1898) (page-marks are not correct)	28
24 Is Vedānta Practical (1897 & 1898)	19
25 Supra Uniqueness of Vedānta (the last 2 pages are written in both sides)	9
26 Maya	20
27 Monistic Vedānta (Notes in pencil) 5 pieces	2
28 Vedānta and the teachings of Jesus	1
29 Ideal of Vedānta and how to explain it	8
30 Ethics of Vedānta (1899)	18
31 Religion of Vedānta (1901)	23
32 Prevailing Philosophy of India (1905)	5
33 Pantheism & Vedānta (1902) & Is Vedānta Pantheism?	21 & 11
34 Influence of Vedānta in the Western Thought	21
35 Is Vedānta Pessimistic? (1898)	19
36 Vedānta in Practical Life (1904)	19
37 What is Yoga & Practice? (page No 25 damaged)	25
38 Practice of Yoga (1906)	6
39 Pranavam (1897) (Page No 14 not found)	20
40 Bhakti Yoga & (Dualistic Vedānta 1903)	27
41 What is Yoga (Notes in pencil 6 pieces)	3
42 True Psychology (1915)	7
43 True Psychology (1916)	13
44 Modification of Mind Substance (1897)	20

46	Self mastery through breathing (1904) and Value of correct Breathing (1906), and Science of Breath, 1907) (including a title page)	22
47	Healing power of Breath (1905)	8
48	Mind and its Modification (1901) (Notes) 6 pieces	3
49	Consciousness notes in pencil—pieces 6	3
56	Sankhya System (1907)	20
51	Science of Spiritual Healing (1914)	17
52	Power of Concentration (1904-1907)	10
53	Power of Concentration (extra)	2
54	Breath of Life	10
55	Breath of Life & Perfect Health (1907)	2
56	Fear (class lecture, 1900)	7
57	Anger (1900)	7
58	Notes on Raja Yoga (1901) in pencil 3 pieces	1
59	Young Peoples Yoga Association (Notes in pencil) 8 pieces	4
60	Pratyahara (1897)	20
61	Pratyahara (extra pages)	6
62	Sensation fits control	6
63	Obstacles to Samadhi (1898)	20
64	Samadhi or Super-consciousness (1897 & 1898)	20
65	Ecstasy (1905)	12
66	Fulfillment of all Desires (1905) with title pages	13
67	Evolution & Religion (1902, 1911)	21
68	Necessity of Symbols (1902 1905) and Idol Worship among the Hindus and Christians	22
69	Ideals of the Hindu Household	10
70	Worship of Krishna in India (1903)	20
71	Worship of Krishna in India (Notes)	2
72	Did Christ teach a New Religion? (1900)	31½
73	Pre existence & Immortality (1905)	11
74	Evolution & Immortality (1911)	21
75	What is Immortality? (1901)	
76	Immortal Life (1904)	
77	Immortality (1907)	
78	Science & Immortality (1909)	22
79	Immortality (1898)	24
80	Is the Soul Immortal? (1903)	3
81	Mystery of the Soul (1904)	12
82	Soul & its Destiny (1904)	12
83	Soul & its Destiny (1907)	12
84	Soul & its Destiny (1911)	12
85	Science of the Soul	15
86	What becomes of the Soul after Death	19
87	Various Aspects of God (1906)	11
88	God in Man (1910)	9
89	Worship of God	5½
90	God, the Teacher of all Teachers and Divine Inspiration (1898 & 1905)	19
91	God Impersonal (pages 2 and 3 missing (1898) with 1 page note	18
92	Philosophy and Religion	12 & 1
93	The Visible can be explained by Invisible (February 6, 1898)	18
94	Devotion and Love	30

## Pages

95	Story of Yayāti (Ms No 44 in list) (Class lectures, 9th March, 1897)	22
96	Christ and Christmas or Worship of Christ and Christmas (December 27th, 1903, December 25th, 1904, December 24th, and 27th, 1905)	20
97	Worship of Krishna and Christ	24
98	Vedanta and Teachings of Christ (February 22nd 1903)	20
99	Jesus and His Teachings (with the slips on pages 2, 6, and 12)	14
100	Origin of Christmas Day	6
101	Slips 7, Christmas Festival	10
102	Slips 8, Buddha and Christ (Class Lecture, December 4th, 1900 (2 slips in each page of the volume)	8
103	Slips 9 Notes from the Old Testament (in pencil)	8
104	Slips 10, Krishna and Christ, November 27, 1900 (Notes, page 3, in pencil)	
105	A Real Mahatman (February 21st, 1904)	15
106	A Modern Hindu Saint (March 1, 1903)	8
107	Latest Divine Incarnation or Life of a Divine Man (March 4th 1906) in pencil	21
108	Non attachment (1st December, 1897, and Rep 2nd April 1898)	19
109	Renunciation (March 5th, 1898), and Renunciation through Love (February 15th, 1903)	21
110	Transmigration and Reincarnation (February 10th, 1901)	20
111	Transmigration (January 22nd 1905) or Theory of Transmigration (March 18th, 1906)	8
112	Unity in Variety (December 29th, 1901) (and 2 slips in pencil in the page No 8)	21
113	Unity in Variety of Religion (January 7th, 1906)	3
114	Unity in Variety, page 10 (Original page number is not correct)	
115	Unity and Variety 24th November, 1899)	16
116	A slip in the corner page of the same Subject	
117	Spiritual Evolution of the Soul, No 1	4
118	Spiritual Evolution of the Soul (May 2nd 1920)	2
119	Spiritual Evolution (Original pages numbers 3 and 4 are missing and numbers are not correct)	
120	Aim of Life	21
121	Individuality and Personality (October 17th 1897)	6
122	Individuality and Personality (March 6th, 1898) (Original page numbers are not correct)	11
123	Swami Vivekananda and His Work (March 8th, 1903)	27
124	My Work in America	31
125	Ramakrishna Mission, as Ideals and Work (containing 26 slips)	9
126	Vivekananda Memorial Mission of Vedanta in America (January 27 1905) (containing 10 slips)	3
127	What is Nirvana?	19
128	The Doctrine of Karma the Law of Causation pages 20 and containing "Law of Retribution", page 1 (stitched in the page No 14)	
129	The Basis of Morality (January 19th, 1898), Repetition of It in 1898	14
130	I am that I am class lectures (2nd February 1897)	18
131	Modern Science and Higher Spiritualism (February 15th, 1914)	12

132	Spiritualistic Mediumship (February 12, 1905) (Rep April 8th, 1906)	13
133	Psychic Phenomena	14
134	Love for Humanity	20
135	Ego and Egoism (December 18th, 1897)	13
136	What is Perfection (March 29th, 1906)?	19
137	Spiritual Ideals of Peace (January 7th, 1917)	22
138	Secret of Devotion (no date)	2
139	Secret of Devotion	23
140	How to gain Self Control (1906)?	9
141	How to gain Self Mastery?	10
142	Self-Mastery of a Saint	12
143	Search after Truth (November 10th, 1901)	21
144	Worship of Truth (1901, December 14th, 1902, 1906, 1909)	20
<i>MISCELLANEOUS</i>		
145	Spiritual Progress (January 10th, 1904), and Spiritual Life (December 18th, 1904)	20
146	Spiritual Needs of Today (August 1st, 1920)	20
147	Class Lecture (May 25th, 1897) (of which 8 pages in pencil)	18
148	Is the Spirit Subject to Evolution (1898)	3
149	Self Sacrifice (January 27th, 1918)	20
150	Different Stages of Spiritual Development (November 23rd, 1898)	18
151	The Attainment of Godconsciousness (November 17th, 1898)	8
152	Work as Worship (January 29th, 1905) (February 17th, 1907)	6
153	Law of Compensation (March 5th, 1905)	9
154	Reward and Punishment	5
155	Various Names and Aspects of One God (5th December, 1897)	20
156	God in Everything (1897)	20
157	Freedom (25th October, 1897)	19
158	Freedom (March 27th 1904)	19
159	"Freedom of the Soul" (May 21st 1905)	10
160	The Teachings of Buddha and Vedanta	14
161	Buddhism and Vedanta	6
162	Buddhism and Vedanta (March 23rd, 1902) These lectures are not complete	3
163	The Message of Lord Buddha	19
164	Scriptures, What do they Teach? (December 22nd 1897) Rep 27th February 1898, Rep (6th April, 1890)	20
165	How a Sinner can become Divine (15th February, 1899) (with an extra page No 14)	13
166	The Secret of Success (January 14th, 1917)	15
167	The Secret of Success (February 3rd, 1918)	4
168	Leaves from My Diary in America, Part I (from August 6th 1897 to September 20th, 1898)	
169	Leaves from My Diary in America Part II (from September 21st 1898 to May 14th 1899) The two Diaries are original handwritings of Revered Swamiji	
170	Leaves from My Diary in America, Part IV (the year 1901)	
171	Letters No 501—600 (in English)	
172	Letters Nos 401—500 (in English)	

- 173 Letters (in Bengali) Nos 1—200  
 174 Letters (English & Bengali of Brahmanada, Premananda, etc)  
       Nos 300—369  
 175 Letters (English) Nos 601—694  
 176 Letters (English) Nos 201—300  
 177 Letters (English) Nos 30—400  
 178 Letters (English) Nos 101—200  
 179 Letters (English) Nos 1—100  
 180 Letters (English)\*  
 181 *Diary Books*  
       Contains 1897 1897 (little) 1897, (one box containing 3 copies 1898  
       (2 copies), 1899 (4 copies) 1900 (3 little, 1 large), 1901 (2 copies), 1902  
       (2 copies), 1903 (2 copies), 1904 (2 copies), 1905 (2 copies) 1906 (2  
       copies), 1907 (2 copies), 1908 (2 copies), 1909 (2 copies), 1910 (2 copies),  
       1911 Plus Pocket Practical Spanish Instructor, a small leather Bag  
       No 1, Plus No 2 Plus A/C Book No A  
       Diary 1912, 1913, 1914, 1915, 1916, 1917, 1918, 1919 1920  
       1921, 1921 (1 little) 1922  
       Contains 1923, 1924, 1925, 1926, 1927,  
       1928 1929  
       Contains 1930 1931, 1932 1933, 1934,  
       1935, 1936, 1937, 1938, 1939

## OTHER LECTURES

Serpent, The Sick, Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Ramakrishna (in pencil),  
 Notes (pencil and ink), India under the British Rule (Nos 1 and 2) A  
 Lecture on Practical Psychology, Psychology of Prayer (Mss),  
 Faith and Knowledge (Mss) February 1903, Progressive Hinduism  
 (Mss), Henry Gerson (Mss), The Symbolism of National Emblems  
 (Mss) The Jewish and Hindu Festivals (Mss), Reincarnation (com-  
 plete) and Heredity and Reincarnation, Individuality, Class Lectures  
 (June 15, 1897) Work is Worship (Mss) What is Divine Love?  
 (Mss) (December 18th, 1898) What is Salvation? 16th December,  
 1897, Realization (Mss) (3rd October, 1897), Idol-worship among the  
 Hindus and Christians, The Necessity of Universal Religion (Mss)  
 (Rangoon Lecture), Ethics of Hinduism and Buddhism (Mss), Aim of  
 True Religion (Mss), Lamaism in Tibet (Typed copy), The Secret  
 Doctrine (Mss), The Secret of Devotion and Love (Mss), Shintoism in  
 Japan (Mss), Realization and Easter (Mss) Questions and Answers  
 (Mss), Steps towards Realization (Mss), Salvation through Love (Mss),  
 Scientific View of Death (Mss) What happens to the Dead? (Mss),  
 Spiritual Needs of Today (Typed) Santarakshit (Mss and T mixed)

What becomes of the Soul after Death (T), Science of Breathing (T)  
 Science of Perfect Health (T), Explanation of the Sanskrit Text on the  
 Yogi (T) Lamaism in Tibet (T), Simple Living (Mss) Simple Living  
 (Mss) Progressive Hinduism (T), Ecstasy (T), Philosophy and Religion  
 (T) Vedanta Philosophy (Mss) Attitude of Vedanta towards all  
 Religions (T), R W Emerson's Poem "Brahma" (T), The necessity of  
 Religions (T), Ramakrishna Mission (T) The Universal Religion (T)  
 What is there beyond the Grave? (T) True Psychology (in a file with 8  
 lectures) (1) Course on True Psychology (p 12), (2) Consciousness  
 (p 20) (3) Powers of the Mind (p 19), (4) Mind and its Modifications  
 (p 17) (5) Power of Concentration (p 17) (6) Individuality and  
 Personality (p 19) (7) States of Existence (p 16), and (8) Our Relation  
 to the Absolute (p 25)

Message of Lord Buddha (1), Buddha and His Teachings (19 copies typed), Unity and Harmony (typed), Spiritual Evolution of the Soul (1), Earth and Its Relation to the Sun (1), Plants and Planetary Influence (1), The Sun and Solar Forces (T), Obstacles to Samadhi (T), Helioelectric Science (typed copy), Constitution of the Zodiac (Ms) Question class (typed) What is the New Pantheism? (7), Vedanta Philosophy (typed copy), Ethics of Vedanta (1), God in Man (7), Steps towards Realization (typed), Spiritual Life (1)

Principles of Vedanta Philosophy (1), Reply to the Address at Rangoon (7), Work is Worship (1), Highest Aim of Life (1), Presidential Address at Scots Free College (T), Jesus the Christ (T), Courses on The Psychology (1920—p 12) History of Sri Krishna (1), *One page only* What is Perfection? (1) Christ and Christmas (T), Lectures and Diagrams of a Japanese Professor

Perfect Health (2 copies, one Ms and one T) Universal Religion of Vedanta (1) Superb Uniqueness of Vedanta (T), A Tribute to Memory of Vivekananda (Ms) Renunciation (T), Yoga and its Scope and Practice (T), Who creates our Destiny? (T), Psychology of Prayer or Is Prayer Necessary (T), The Efficacy of Prayer (T), Secret of Devotion (T), Worship of Truth (T), Secret of Success (T), Buddhism in Japan (T), Buddhism (T), The Law of Karma (T), Spiritualism (T), Magnetic Healing (1), Self-Mastery (T) Life of Ramakrishna (1), Science of Mental and Spiritual Healing (T), Universal Religion of Vedanta (T), Pre-existence and Reincarnation (T), Vedanta Philosophy (Printed copy stitched) Self sacrifice (T) Search after Truth (T), Spiritualistic Mediumship (1) Sintoism in Japan (1) How to gain Self-control (T), Karma Yoga of Bhagavad Gita (1) Law of Compensation and Retribution (T) The Soul and its Destiny (T) Evolution and Reincarnation (T), Ethics of Vedanta (T), *Lecture on Ego and Egoism*\*

Gita Lectures Original (typed) 64 lectures Discourses and Psychology on Bhagavad Gita—10 lectures (1) Secret of Death from 1901 November 5th, 1902 January 28th), (2) Soul and God, (3) Rebirth of the Soul (4) Science of Breathing, (5) Transmigration and Reincarnation (6) The Highest Ideal of Yoga and how to attain it, (7) Self-mastery through Breathing, (8) Power of Concentration

Raja Yoga and Practical Psychology (from January 30th to May 28th, 1920) (19 copies), Perfect Health, Value of Correct Breathing (April 15th 1906), Historicity of Sri Krishna, Christ and His Teaching (December 1905) What is Divine Love? Practice of Yoga (February 24th, 1906), Science and Mental and Spiritual Healing, The Power of Healing, Mohammed and His Teaching (2 copies), Kundalini

Religion of Vedanta, Unity and Variety (December 29th, 1901), God in Everything (February 11th, 1902), Pantheism and Vedanta Buddhism and Vedanta (2 lectures, Nos 1 and 2), Vedanta and the Teaching of Christ, Search after Truth, Faith and Knowledge, Worship of Truth Efficacy of Prayer Is Prayer Necessary? Divine Love, Renunciation through Love, Salvation through Love (April 28th 1902) What is Salvation? What is Perfection? Spiritual Evolution of the Soul, Worship of Divine Mother (March 30th 1902) Did Christ teach a new Religion? Spiritualism and Ancestor Works, Om, Sankhya Philosophy (January 15th 1901)

Heredity and Reincarnation Science of Mystery, Light and Notes upon God Vision, The Conception of Evolution Evolution of Prana Love for Humanity, Lectures in Foreman's Christian College Lahore Lectures delivered at Symphony Hall (December 19th, 1915) Some coloured Diagrams with Notes, Astronomy, Law of Karma (May 14th

\*Ms = Manuscript  
T = Typed copy

1905), Magnetic Healing, Meditation, Fulfilment of all Desires Religion  
*India of 20th Century*

Scientific View of Death (March 20th, 1921) Progressive Religion  
 (Bramma Mandu, Darjeeling), Aspects of Unity (two pieces, one is typed  
 and one manuscript) Man's Relation to God, Lessons (4A, 74B, 74C,  
 74D, 74E Universal Religion of the Vedanta, An Oration in Prose,  
 The Duty of the Church of Woman

Life after Death, Discourses on Bhagavad Gita in Mss (Translation  
 of the original text—10 copies), Cosmic Evolution and Revolution, What  
 is Salvation? Concentration, Psychology, Raja Yoga Aphorism, Sri Rama-  
 Krishna, Readings from the Vedas, Translation from the Sanskrit of  
 Aphorisms given by Swami Vivekananda (July 15th, 184), India and  
 Her People (Mss), Translation of the Holy Quran (2 pages)

Necessity of Symbols, Christian Science and Vedanta, Question  
 Class on Buddha (March 28th, 1921), Real Mahataman (March 13th,  
 1921) Did Christ teach a New Religion, Santana Dharma, (2nd  
 October, 1921), Speech of Swami Abhedananda (21st February, 1922),  
 Unity and Variety of Religion (January 7th, 1906), Foundation Lectures  
 of Vivekananda Society (November 20th, 1923) Science of Perfect  
 Health, Science and Immortality, Speeches in Dacca University, Sayings  
 of Sri Ramakrishna (32 pages, 5 pages, and 3 pages)

Origin of Christmas Day (Notes—3 pages), Hindu Philosophy in  
 India, Life of Swami Vivekananda, a Direct Disciple of Bhagavan Sri  
 Ramakrishna, Latest Divine Incarnation (March 4th, 1926), Santana  
 Dharma (delivered at Kuala Lumpur in 1921, printed copy), Education  
 (3 lectures), Lectures at Kuala Lumpur (Mss), Raja Yoga (2 lectures, one  
 is 16 pages, and the other is 20 pages (1) Notes—2 pages Question  
 and Answer Class, Easter (with notes in pencil), Questions and Answers  
 (May 2nd, 1905), Pranayama, What is there beyond the Grave? (22  
 pages), Obstacles to Samadhi (8 pages) Prana and Healing Power, Search  
 after Truth, Aids to attainment of Godconsciousness, Christ and  
 Christmas, Jewish and Hindu Festivals, Is the Spirit subject to  
 Evolution Freedom (2 copies), Spiritual Ideals of Peace, Kali Tapashu  
 (in Bengali), Notes on Madheymika Karika, Two Religious Poets, Notes  
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*The first publishing dates of some of the books of Swami Abhedananda,  
 published by the Vedanta Society of New York, U S A*

Reincarnation (1st edition)	1900
Spiritual Unfoldment (1st edition)	1902
Philosophy of Work (1st edition)	1903
How to be a Yogi? (1st edition)	1903
Divine Heritage of Man (1st edition)	1903
Self-Knowledge (1st edition)	1905
Gospel of Ramakrishna (1st edition)	1905
India and Her People (1st edition)	1905-6
Nine Lectures, Parts I & II	1909
Sayings of Ramakrishna	1910
Great Saviours of the World	1912
Human Affection and Divine Love	1912
Lectures and Addresses in India	1909

*Chronology of the Lectures on the Katha Upanishad or Mystery of  
 Death, delivered in New York, U S A*

Chapter I	on January	2nd, 1906
Chapter II	on January	9th, 1906
Chapter III	on January	16th, 1906

Chapter IV	on January 23rd,	1906
Chapter V	on January 30th,	1906
Chapter VI	on February 6th,	1906
Chapter VII	on February 13th,	1906
Chapter VIII	on February 20th,	1906
Chapter IX	on February 27th,	1906
Chapter X	on March 6th,	1906
Chapter XI	on March 13th,	1906
Chapter XII	on March 20th,	1906
Chapter XIII	on March 27th,	1906
Chapter XIV	on April 3rd,	1906
Chapter XV	on April 10th,	1906
Chapter XVI	on April 17th,	1906
Chapter XIX	on May 8th,	1906
Chapter XVII	on April 24th,	1906
Chapter XVIII	on May 1st,	1906



